University of Alberta

Community Participation in Education Reform Programs:

Misplaced Assumptions, Paradoxes and Potentials

by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, who taught me and exemplified the importance of living up to one's decision and belief with pride and responsibility.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1—Introduction 1
Introduction 1
Identification of the Problem 2
Need for the Study 2
Purpose of the Study 3
Research Questions 4
Significance of the Study 5
Limitations and Delimitations 6
Topical Organization of the Thesis 7
Chapter 2—Literature Review and Conceptual Framework 9
Introduction 9
Background of Participatory Development and Community Participation 9
Modernization Paradigm and Rethinking of Development 9
Genealogy and Theoretical Bases of Participatory Development 12
Recent Location of Participatory Development in Development Industry 15
Overview of Community Participation in Education 19
Community Participation in Education: emergence and anticipated objectives 19
Strategic Forms of Community Participation in Education 23
Critical Backlashes against Participatory Development Approaches 25
"Participation is Good": an act of faith 25
Domestication and Marginalization of Radical Faces of Participation 26
Self-critiques and Revisionism in the Participatory Orthodoxy 28
Lack of Considerations to Wider Social Structures and Patterns 29
Summary 30
Chapter 3—Methodology and Research Design 32
Introduction 32
Research Paradigm 32
Ontology 33
Epistemology 33
Methodological Choice 34
Selection of a Specific Qualitative Method 35
Data Collection and Analysis 38
Summary 40

Chapter 4—Paradoxes and Misplaced Assumptions of Community Participation in Education 42
Introduction 42
Myths of Community 43
Community Context and Characteristics: differences among communities 43
Differences within a Community and Local Power Relations 45
Local Power Relations and Problematics around Participation 46
Local Input through Participation: how effective? how genuine? 48
Constitution of Self-confessed Participatory Projects 49
Intra-community Power Relations and Normalized Knowledge 52
"Planning Knowledge": officially shaped local knowledge 56
Participation, Motivation, Commitment Examined 58
High Motivation, Interest and Commitment: locals = social beings? 59
Allegiances to the School Community: problematics 61
Continuous Popular Demands for Schooling: contradiction in transition 63
Ruralized Education: principles and realities 65
Blueprint of Ruralized Education and Local Perceptions: contradictions 66
Decentralization: a structure for community participation or containerization? 70
Objectives and Strategies of Educational Decentralization 71
Efficacy of Community-level Training and Workshops 72
Decentralization for Conflict Management and Decentralized Despotism 75
Summary 77
Chapter 5—Conclusions and Recommendations 79
Introduction 79
Review of the Study 79
Summary of Findings 80
Recommendations 82
Political Situation and State's Role Facilitating Equal Opportunities 82
Organizational, Institutional Accommodations 87
Formation of Effective Micro/Project-level Mechanisms 91
Suggestions for Further Studies 92
References 95

List of Tables

Table 1: Development Models 11

Table 2: Forms of Community Participation 24

List of Figures

Figure 1: Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model for CDA.....40

Figure 2: Relationship between School and Community.....52

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

In many post-colonial and/or less industrialized, low-income nations, the colonially introduced/imposed, centralized models of educational systems were revealed to be irrelevant, exclusive and inefficient (Nyerere, 1967; Hall, 1986; Jones, 1992; Shaeffer, 1992; Samoff, 1999). As a result of the strong backlashes against top-down models of educational development, education reform programs predicated on community-based orientations and public participation have attained a great popularity and have been perceived almost as a golden principle for "educational revolution." Together with such a public popularity, it is also the shift in international development from the statist approach of centrally-oriented decision making to decentralized and thus relatively more inclusive models that have brought about the official acceptance and implementation of community participation in education reform programs. Educational policy makers and international aid agencies have widely welcomed the notion of community participation as a prerequisite for (1) making instruction more relevant to the needs of local communities; (2) reaching a larger grassroots sector of the population, and thus achieving a goal of 'Education for All,' with an extended financial coverage through community cost sharing; and (3) counteracting various persistent educational problems (Jones, 1992; Condy, 1998; Rose, 2003a). Ideas and strategies of community participation in education are perceived almost as a panacea for various detrimental issues in educational development.

Identification of the Problem

The idea and strategy of participatory development approaches have been "growing quantitatively as well as receiving increasing endorsement from the development cooperation system and in development thinking" (Rahman, 1995, p. 32). However, there exists a significant lack of critical examinations of underlying factors upon which these assumptions are predicated. Therefore, it seems to be, not a well tested and contested efficacy of community participation approaches, but rather a cultic belief in its "bottom-up," "alternative," and "anti-developmentalist" nature that make this approach stand as politically correct, and possibly sustainable and effective methods toward educational improvement. It seems to be often the case that while catering to the idea of community participation with great optimistic anticipations, many stakeholders have not fully questioned the logic of assumptions underscoring it.

Need for the Study

An increasing number of social scientists and development experts have been professionally bound together to examine various weaknesses, difficulties and inconsistencies in community-based participatory development approaches. However, many of these critical backlashes have so far failed to "affect, qualitatively or quantitatively, the apparently inexorable spread of participation in development" (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 3). Moreover, while theoretical analyses/critiques and strategic revisions were, both quantitatively and qualitatively, well developed on community-based participatory development approaches in general, relatively little were documented on problematics in applying community-based participatory approaches specifically to

educational reform programs. Although attempts have been made to investigate critical and problematic issues in community-based educational programs (Shaeffer, 1992; Shaeffer, 1994; Johnson, 1997), only a few seem to go beyond the form of offering strategic manuals with a mere abstract listing of detrimental causal factors. Many of the studies do not correspond with a comprehensive analytical investigation and/or theorization of micro-level, multi-dimensional facets of the relative situations, i.e., psychological, political, socio-economic, and cultural aspects of human lives. Also, many do not seek to contextualize the issues in macro-level, international agendas, motivations and mechanisms.

Purpose of the Study

This study concentrates on its fundamental purpose of identifying some of the major assumptions of community participation in education reform programs and explaining whether they are well contested, critical premises, or otherwise how and why they are blindly held, misplaced assumptions. The overall intention of the study is to bring about a higher awareness of problematic assumptions of community-based education reform programs, and also of possible negative implications that may be brought about by such assumptions.

Specifically, with a close attention to the conditions where institutional assumptions do not play out as have been expected, the study investigates the foundational factors that condition and cause such mismatches between expectations and actualities. Moreover, by examining what premises/assumptions are consciously and intentionally contested and what are relegated or under-/uncontested, it identifies and conceptualizes the

central/institutional strategic themes, and moreover, the (hidden) conditions, mindsets, and motivations underlying the organizational gaze and focus. This conceptualization of central, institutional strategic themes is strengthened by several analytical steps—locating and historicizing participatory development and community participation approaches in institutional fields of international development. Such archaeology of participatory development is to inform the following purposes:

1. It unravels how history has given shape to the current strategic implementations and popularity of participatory development;
2. traces the social, theoretical and philosophical bases of the idea of participatory development; and
3. examines the fundamental historical processes/mechanisms of development institutions or agencies at work to legitimize the ideas and strategies of participatory development in development institutions.

In this way, with its micro-analysis of misplaced assumptions and macro-analysis of development history and ideologies, the study examines "the complex relationships between structures or strategies of discourse and both the local and the global, social or political context" (van Dijk, 1990, p. 14). Moreover, in my belief that studies of development should not only be studies about development but also studies for development, the study aims to relocate community participation, or dislocate the cult of such, by suggesting visions and potentials for more genuine community participation.

Research Questions

The general questions of this research are: What are the major misplaced and

paradoxical assumptions underlying participatory, community-based approaches in education reform programs? How and why are the assumptions misplaced, and moreover, what are the detrimental causal factors that widen the fault-line between blueprints/assumptions/premises and realities? What are the educational as well as socio-economic implications/consequences of community-based educational programs that are predicated on strategically and/or analytically misplaced assumptions?

Significance of the Study

With an examination of misplaced assumptions in education reform through community participation, this study provides an important basis for understanding some of the critical issues in education reform programs that are exclusively and solely reliant on community participation approaches. From a theoretical perspective, the study informs a conceptual and theoretical framework for comprehending the issues around community-based education programs in low-income nations, with extended contributions to bridging macro-analysis and micro-analysis of the relevant complexities. At a practical level, the study hopes to bring about a critical, higher awareness of problematic issues in participatory, community-based projects. This has the potential to enable individual researchers, practitioners and policy makers to become more conscious and conscientized about their practices, mindsets or assumptions in designs and implementations of policies/strategies of participatory development approaches. At a policy level, this individual-level higher awareness potentially benefits governmental institutions and aid agencies that strive to, or are required to, relocate their "development" thinking and acting to achieve equitable and sustainable development initiatives and policy-making. Overall

intention is to carefully and critically emphasize the needs to reorient oneself to, and moreover, reconsider one's individual and/or organizational assumptions, and to critically investigate "the extent to which particular policies and practices are consistent with our moral vision for education" (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 19). In this way, this project is expected to have the potential to help avoid not only an investment in an unattainable illusion but also abuses of the basic principles of community participation and dehumanizing oppressions upon the already oppressed people.

Limitations and Delimitations

There are several limitations and delimitations that are inherent in and imposed upon this study. The study is limited by the choice of research data collection methods, primarily a documentary analysis; therefore, other types of data that can be collected through different methods are not considered.

Also, there are several other delimitations imposed upon the study to make it manageable. First, the literature reviewed for the study is limited only to those available in English. Second, although this study is not a case study of one particular region/location, the discussion selectively uses some examples from Ghana, one of the Western African nations, to provide a contextualized analysis of the issues. The researcher selects Ghana, considering the fact that Ghana is one of the nations that have implemented various educational programs with a relatively extended focus on community-based participatory approaches. Part of the reasons why the researcher selected Ghana is also that the nation is often presented as a model nation implementing a variety of pilot educational programs by some major multilateral organizations.

Topical Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into the following five sections:

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the emergence of participatory development approaches in education, the identification of the problem, the rationale for the study, the purpose and research questions of the study, the significance of the study, and the study's limitations and delimitations.

Chapter 2 presents a conceptual framework with a comprehensive literature review relative to the topic. It consists of three sections: (1) an overview of participatory development, (2) an overview of community participation in education, and (3) a description of critiques of participatory development. The purpose of this chapter is to offer a framework for a macro-analysis (i.e., a discourse and policy analysis) of participatory development by historicizing and locating it within broader international and educational development fields. It is also to describe theoretical traditions in the literature that critiques the ideas and strategies of participatory development.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, referring to the research paradigm, the researcher's ontology, epistemology and fundamental assumptions, data collection and analysis methods, and timeline. It also provides a rationale for the use of qualitative research methods in the study in a way that combines a qualitative documentary analysis, a critical discourse/policy analysis and a historical research.

Chapter 4 presents findings concerning the paradoxes and misplaced assumptions of community participation in education. This section consists of five categories: (1) myths of community, (2) local knowledge input through community participation, (3) issues in participation, motivation and commitment, (4) principles and realities of ruralized

curriculum, and (5) decentralization's dualism as a structure for community participation or containerization.

Chapter 5, as the final chapter of the thesis, provides a summary of the research findings and analyses. It also offers a discussion of potentials and visions for genuine community participation, suggesting comprehensive transformations selectively at the three levels: (1) transformation and rehabilitation of states' political social systems as well as international relations and agendas; (2) establishment of institutional accommodations, regulating frameworks and collaborative political will; and (3) formation of effective micro/project-level mechanisms. The discussion concludes with recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Historical and recent (paradigmatic and practical) location of participatory development approaches are interpreted in various different ways across time, space and social/institutional/philosophical locations of interpreters (either advocates or opponents). There are, for instance, various interpretations of what historical events and elements have, directly or indirectly, initiated and influenced the emergence of participatory development. Thus, this chapter based on my review of the related literature and theorization is to present my own interpretations, explorations and descriptions. The chapter offers a conceptual framework that analytically articulates and situates this expansive theme of participatory development and community participation in education. It is also presumed to become a framework for a macro-analysis, i.e., analyses of discourse and policies of participatory development, and moreover, an interpretative framework for critical, not rhetorical or naïve, explorations and analyses followed in the later chapters.

Background of Participatory Development and Community Participation

Modernization Paradigm and Rethinking of Development

The decades of development initiatives in the 1950s and the 1960s were heavily catering to growth-centered development strategies, the so-called modernization paradigm. A tremendous amount of attempts were made by multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other international agencies to implement theWestern modernist paradigm into various development projects. In the

modernization development paradigm, "development" was merely equated with growth, and simply measured by means of per capita GNP (Pieterse, 1998; Peet & Hartwick, 1999). Development enterprises were suggested to, or supposed to, operate in state-led and/or market-led models in heavily top-down systems. The idea of trickle-down was presented as a solution to persistent problems of poverty. It was the idea that growth attained in one sector of society with strong markets would trickle down to counteractively benefit the deprived sector of societies. To reach the anticipated growth, the imposition of Western-oriented resources like technology, science, and professional knowledge was presented as the "must." In the 1950s and the 1960s, when there was no alternative, or anti-modernization, paradigm, the modernization paradigm had been regarded as *the* development paradigm.

However, the increasing failures of growth-centered/modernization strategy and "the persistence of problems like poverty and malnutrition led to a serious crisis of confidence among the believers" (Peet & Hartwick, 1999, p. 141). These unfruitful negative situations started to unsettle the "mainstreamness" of the paradigm. Meantime, dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the mainstream, top-down development led to an emergence of an alternative development approach (Pieterse, 1998, p. 346). The 1970s saw the emergence of an anti-modernization, growth-centered paradigm, starting with basic human needs and social transformation strategies in international development industry. Pieterse (1998) illustrates some of the main differences in development models, defined in growth-centered development and redefined in alternative (social transformatory) development (see Table 1). Around this time, there was a big identifiable hiatus between these two paradigmatic development models in terms of their definitions and ideals of

development.

Table 1: Development Models

	Growth	Social Transformation
Objective	Accumulation	Capacitation, human development
Resources	Capital, technology, trade Foreign investment, external expertise	Human skills, local resources, social capital. Local knowledge
Features	Growth-led	Equity-led
Agency	State-led. Or market-led Development banks	People, community. Synergies society, government, business
Epistemology	Science	Critique of science and indigenous knowledge
Modalities	Exogenous examples, demonstration effect, technology transfer. Modernity vs. tradition	Endogenous development, Modernization from within. Modernization of tradition
Methods	Import substitution industrialization, export-led growth, growth poles, innovation, SAP	Participation, micro credit Sustainability, democratization
Social Policy	Trickle-down. Safety net	Trickle-up. Social Capacitation through redistribution
Development co-operation	Aid, assistance	Partnership, mutual obligation
Indicators	GDP	Green GDP. HDI. Institutional densities

Source: Adapted from Pieterse, 1998 (Table 1, p. 354)

It should be noted that alternative, anti-modernization development has not been a single body of theories and conceptions. It has traveled under many aliases such as:

> appropriate development, participatory development, people-centred development, human scale development, people's self-development, autonomous development, holistic development; and many elements relevant to alternative development are developed, not under its own banner, but under specific headings, such as participation, participatory action research, grassroots movements, NGOs, empowerment, conscientization, liberation theology, democratization, citizenship, human rights, development ethics, ecofeminism, cultural diversity and so forth (Pieterse, 1998, pp. 351-352).

In light of this, although the open-endedness of participatory development defies the identification of one precise "birth certificate," it can be possibly understood as one component of anti-modernization paradigm, that grew out of, and with, various elements in social transformation strategies such as liberation, people-centeredness and empowerment.

Genealogy and Theoretical Bases of Participatory Development

Profound dissatisfaction and frustration with failed top-down development paradigm and projects are one of the experiential geneses of participatory development. However, there are various other historical antecedents (theoretical, ideological and experiential). This section will explore the genealogy of participatory development and community participation approaches. It should be first clarified that the examination of genealogy in this section will look at both participatory development and community participation in a more or less combined manner. This is because participatory development (or more inclusively, alternative development) is often understood as development *from below*. In a context of popular grassroots mobilization, "below" mainly refers to community and NGOs (Pieterse, 1998, p. 346). In this sense, assuming the intertwined and indistinguishable natures of participatory development and community participation in terms of their concepts and geneses, the genealogy in this section will be informed by that of both.

First, I would like to analyze the historical antecedents of participatory development, and second, I would look at the theoretical underpinnings of participatory development and community participation. Although it seems impossible to refer to all the

influential and inspirational historical geneses, to name a few, some of them would include (1) the community development movement in the 1950s and the 1960s, (2) western social work and community radicalism originating in the 1930s and the 1940s, (3) neighborhood democracy as opposed to representative (often exclusive) democracy, (4) populism—the ideas of self-help/self-sufficiency and communitarianism as opposed to modernization and industrialization, and (5) anarchism as opposed to institutionalization of coercive authority (Midgley, 1986). Especially, the community development movement in the 1950s and 1960s became a source of inspiration for contemporary community participation theories. The basic principles of both community development and community participation have much in common; for example, greater community involvement and community mobilization for the improvement of social and economic circumstances of ordinary people. However, it is also true that community participation partly grew out of the criticism against inadequacies of the community development movement. According to Midgley (1986), although the community development movement may be regarded as an immediate predecessor to the community participation movement, contemporary community participation advocates have strongly criticized community development, claming that it failed because of its bureaucratic administration and superimposed direction (p. 19). However, it seems difficult to maintain that the overall participatory development approaches have completely lost touch with any element of community development since its emergence because in some respects, it revisits the community development movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Pieterse, 1998, p. 346).

Furthermore, the ideas of populism have considerably informed and inspired community participation and participatory development principles. Midgley (1986)

maintains that:

> As in populism, current community participation theory suggests that ordinary people have been exploited by politicians and bureaucrats and that they have been excluded not only from political affairs but from the development process in general. Their simple way of life is threatened by the forces of modernization and rapid social change and they face increasing hardship as a result of economic and political mismanagement. By organizing local people and making them aware of their situation, community participation provides a mechanism for the mobilization of the masses and a collective means of redress (p. 16).

To some extent, the principles of participatory development can be understood as an expression of primary populist belief.

Now, for an analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of participatory development and community participation, it would never be easy to articulate them particularly due to the varied influences of ideological, theoretical and experiential antecedents as have been reviewed above. However, one of the most influential theoretical geneses can be claimed as the pedagogical and political philosophy of Paulo Freire. Freire (2002) is clearly against the modernization development paradigm/project, arguing that:

> If we consider society as a being, it is obvious that only a society which is a "being for itself" can develop. Societies which are dual, "reflex," invaded, and dependent on the metropolitan society cannot develop because they are alienated; their political, economic, and cultural decision-making power is located outside themselves, in the invader society...[T]he latter determines the destiny of the former...It is essential not to confuse modernization with development. The former, although it may affect certain groups in the "satellite society," is almost always induced; and it is the metropolitan society which derives the true benefits therefrom (p. 161).

Freire (2002) adds that:

> In order to determine whether or not a society is developing, one must go beyond criteria based on indices of "per capita" income (which, expressed in statistical form, are misleading) as well as those which concentrate on the study of gross income. The basic, elementary criterion is whether or not the society is "being for itself." If it is not, the other criteria indicate modernization rather than development (p. 162).

Furthermore, the Freirean concept of 'conscientization' has informed the theoretical

underpinnings of participatory development and the overall grassroots mobilization movements in development (Rahman, 1995, p. 25). The idea of 'conscientization' embraces people's critical awareness and confrontation with reality, and moreover, their critical objectification and action upon that reality in order to pursue the fight for their own liberation (Freire, 2002). Freirean philosophy is remarked on as one of the significant theoretical roots of participatory development especially because of its emphasis on people's fight for liberation and transformation at their side, not initiated by the external. Some sources of inspiration have also been drawn from the theoretical works of the Frankfurt School theorists. The Marxist concept of self-emancipation of oppressed classes, in particular, has influenced the early proponents of participatory development (Boswell & Dixon, 1993; Rahman, 1995). In the Marxist framework, in short, people's participation particularly through processes of dialogue and interaction is advocated as a means to replace subject-object relationships between oppressors and the oppressed, and form a basis of more direct social and political involvement of those hitherto excluded. This notion of empowering people is indeed understood as a goal in itself.

Recent Location of Participatory Development in Development Industry

Before it attained a public legitimacy, the idea of participation "had been systematically discarded earlier by economists, planners and politicians" (Rahnema, 1995, p. 117). In most of the 1970s, participatory development was still outside the demarcating line which embraced the growth-centered, top-down development model within it as the mainstream development model. Institutionally, before the dawn of the mushrooming grassroots sector popularity, NGOs activities had been enthusiastically supported neither

by donor governments nor by international agencies or aid organizations. At the time when the "GNP-growth-plus-trickle-down" model was an organizational norm in international development, the adoption of participatory elements in development projects by multilateral institutions such as the UN agencies and IFIs was hardly identifiable in any major development projects.

However, the entire mainstream development had never been fixed, but rather it has been gradually shifting in accordance with the shift in trend and major thinking in development circles. An increasing number of development experts in international and multilateral institutions began to recognize the importance of popular participation in projects. Strategically, several elements of alternative/participatory development such as basic needs, participation, self-reliance, and sustainability have started to be adopted into the mainstream. For example, after analyzing the efficacy of their poverty alleviation programs implemented since 1975, the World Bank researchers came to recognize the importance of active participation by the poor to achieve long-term sustainability. In this climate, the voluntary/NGOs sector has acquired widespread interests and enthusiastic support from major development institutions because of the emerging reputation that NGOs' "participatory" and bottom-up approaches would better help meet the needs of people.

Today, as Pieterse (1998) analyzes, mainstream development seems to have opened up and several features of alternative development are being shared and practiced not merely by NGOs but also by UN agencies and the World Bank (pp. 369-370). In the current development industry, except for some possible strategic and ideological breaks, i.e., between the 'New York' (the UN) and the 'Washington Consensus,' a great degree of

co-optation, integration and consensus are underway. This consensus in most aspects and stages of development enterprises should be better understood as a logical and not incidental function of the way the overall development process is developing. This consensus seems to be well established upon "a number of underlying threads" (Mayo & Craig, 1995, p. 3)—magnetic and tactic strategies of integration and co-optation. At first sight, stakeholders in development fields today may appear to share the same kind of rhetoric, ideals and definitions of development; however, this very orthodoxy and apparent consensus are likely to be obscuring their very conflicting interests, stakes and meanings of development. In order to critically, not rhetorically, locate participatory development in the current development industry, it is helpful and crucial to analyze the major development players' perceptions toward participation, and their positions, relations and interactions in the participatory development enterprise.

Overall, "participation" continuously appears as one of the most popular ideas and slogans. It is no longer perceived as a threat. It is regarded more as an economically appealing and politically attractive slogan; as an effective means to overcome the past pitfalls and failures in the conventional development projects; as a good fundraising device; and as a useful strategy that nicely dovetails with the privatization of development as a part of prevailing neo-liberalism (Rahnema, 1995). Institutionally, many of the major development agencies have been precisely following the change in the mainstream development paradigm. Rahnema (1995), for example, argues that intra-governmental development agencies are weary of their governments' further cuts in their financial resources as a result of the public favor and appreciation of the NGOs sector's capability for sustainable development. In situations as these, the agencies have started to "seek to

demonstrate their abilities to be, at one and the same time, professional *and* participatory" (Rahnema, 1995, p. 119). Whatever the reason is, the major development agencies have been widening their share and influence in participatory development enterprises.

One of the influences of the development agencies in such transition would be regarded as their initiatives in expanding the notion of 'participation' from community participation and the voluntary/NGOs sector participation to the private enterprise involvement. For instance, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (1994) explains their rethinking of actors in development:

> In the past, we have often tended to suggest that government bodies were the ones who could best influence the development process... We have learned from past experience that due to the increased rate of change and the complexity of issues it has become imperative to include as well other actors, such as non-governmental organizations and private enterprises (pp. 7-8).

While this sort of statement can make a diffused impression, it has been clear enough to become an official "voucher" for private corporations to take part in development industry. With an attainment of such legitimate vouchers, many private corporations have started to lobby for the further privatization of development. It seems that by critiquing an inadequacy and inability of government-owned enterprises in providing equal services and effectively incorporating the grassroots sector for collaboration, the private sector has skillfully attacked centralized systems of public social services, emphasizing the efficacy of decentralization, de-bureaucratization or privatization.

Apparently, the strongest "vouchers" for the private sector have been issued by the IFIs through their free-market, neo-liberal development strategies such as structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and private sector development strategies (PSD). To understand today's "mixed economy of welfare" (Mayo & Craig, 1995, p. 7) and articulate

the complex threads underlying an apparent consensus in participatory development, it is imperative to review the relations between such neo-liberal strategies and participation. The (revised) neo-liberal strategies aim specifically to reduce a public expenditure and promote alternative administrative and financial solutions drawing on a private market, the voluntary/NGOs sectors and community-based self-help (Mayo & Craig, 1995, p. 4). Community participation is, Mayo & Craig (1995) continue to insist, part of a wider strategy to promote states' savings and to unload various burden from the public sector onto communities. They write:

> community participation, in so far as this should be promoted, should be related to overall goals of cost-sharing/cost reduction for the public sector (that is, shifting costs from public sector budgets by persuading communities to make increased contributions through voluntary effort and/or self-help/voluntary unpaid labour) and through increased project/programme efficiency (Mayo & Craig, 1995, p. 4).

The state-led approaches have increasingly given way to civic and market actor-driven development initiatives. Referring to an increased participation of the informal/private sector in development projects, Pieterse (1998) insists that "the accompanying message of deregulation and government roll-back beautifully dovetailed with the prevailing neoliberal outlook" (p. 350).

Overview of Community Participation in Education

Community Participation in Education: emergence and anticipated objectives

With the attainment of political independence from colonial powers, the time should have been right for the governments and the people in emerging nations to achieve social, economic and cultural independence. However, the path towards achieving independent, stable socio-economic development has been difficult for many countries.

Economic and educational planners regarded education as a panacea for sufficing these nations' manpower needs and achieving economic stability. Indeed, the attempts of educational expansion seemed to be being achieved slowly but steadily. However, planners were soon encountered with the reality of slow job market growth and the unavailability of jobs for educated school leavers. The emerging social issues such as rural-urban migration and the high rate of unemployment among young school leavers were persistent.

Educational policy makers have also been continuously confronted with the issue of how to break down colonial legacy in education. Their task has been to 'decolonize' colonially introduced/imposed western systems of education toward systems that are more relevant and conducive to nations' social and economic development needs and endogenous cultural systems. To achieve the nation-wide (both rural and urban) development, it has been considered necessary to reach the larger population in grassroots sectors of societies who have been consistently excluded from educational systems. Nevertheless, the reality of educational crises has been severe and persistent in most of the emerging nations: their educational systems have been seen as "insufficient in the supply of places, inaccessible to various marginal populations, irrelevant in content, inadequate in quality, and/or unable to create and sustain demand" (Shaeffer, 1992, p. 164).

Such severe and enduring educational crises have fuelled dismay about formal education and schooling, and moreover, a mistrust in the government-led top-down/centralized model of education reform.

The 1970s saw "a concerted effort among educational planners, particularly in the multilateral aid organizations to examine alternative strategies" (Hall, 1986, p. 74) to overcome these problems. Most desperately needed was the design of educational content

that could equip rural school graduates with vocational skills relevant for self-reliance and self-employment in rural villages. Locally relevant educational content was presumed to counteract the migration of young school leavers from rural areas to the urban center, which should have then helped sustainable development in rural areas. Such concepts of the school-community integration are strongly stated in Nyerere's writing, "Education for Self-Reliance" (1967). For Nyerere (1967), schools must be a preparation for life and service in villages and rural areas of a nation (p. 281), and moreover, "children must be made part of the community by having responsibilities to the community, and having the community involved in school activities" (p. 287). Institutionally, for example, at the dawn of the McNamara presidency in the 1970s, the World Bank started to change and expand its identity as a development agency by adopting the basic needs approach (Jones, 1992; Rose, 2003b). In lending for education, the World Bank, which had been taking a skeptical stance in financing primary education in the 1960s, began to show, at least in its rhetoric, its increased recognition of "the need to render basic education relevant to local needs, particularly through shedding the colonialist pretensions of an urban-oriented, academic general education, and encouraging a view of primary education as a self-contained, terminating experience for most pupils" (Jones, 1992, p. 191). With enthusiastic support from multilateral institutions, many of the emerging nations started to pursue the strategy of concentrating on secondary and higher education, combined with locally relevant targets such as universal primary education (Midgley, 1986, p. 72).

When the notion of community participation was introduced as a reform strategy in social development, it was largely welcomed as "a kind of magical 'missing ingredient' from development packages which, once provided, would guarantee success" (Hall, 1986,

p. 92). Soon in the education sector, participation started to be embraced as a prerequisite and panacea for (1) making instruction more relevant to the needs of local communities, (2) reaching a larger grassroots sector of the population with an extended financial coverage through community cost sharing, and (3) counteracting various persistent educational problems. This concerted embracing of community participation in the educational development sector can be perceived as a logical consequence of the mode of time, which searched for and treasured alternative/substitutive sources for reducing government public expenditure and offsetting the pressure on formal educational systems. Rose (2003a) maintains that:

> It is not coincidental that a more explicit emphasis on community participation has corresponded with the economic crises which have adversely affected education systems in sub-Saharan African countries since the 1980s, together with rapid expansion of school systems in the context of the drive for achieving universal primary education, necessitating the search for alternative sources for resources (p. 49).

Community participation in education has been often presented as an effective means for alternative as well as additional finances for education. Furthermore, the rationale for community participation suggests that active community participation would improve the accountability of schools and teachers for the provision of quality education and cost-effective school management, which is expected to consequently increase access to education. Also, at least in theory, cost sharing through community participation is believed to result in a more equitable distribution of services and benefits to the large unprivileged sectors of society (Rose, 2003a). In short, community participation in education is expected to achieve and assure efficiency, quality, access, and equity in educational provision (Condy, 1998; Rose, 2003a).

Strategic Forms of Community Participation in Education

As expectations of communities and community participation have changed, the forms of community participation in education programs have altered accordingly. While the traditional forms of community participation were essentially concerned with the provision of infrastructure, the recent education reform programs have put more emphases on communities' involvement in management and supervision of schools or decision-making in curriculum design (Condy, 1998, p. 36). Recent community participation in education seems to represent a considerable range in both form and extent (see Table 2).

There are also several other instances where communities are also involved in policy design, teacher hiring/firing, and payment of teachers. A variety of participatory approaches or methods such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) have been adopted in various stages of educational programs which are aimed at provoking more inclusive community-level discussions.

Such approaches are used, for instance, to encourage community assessment of the value of education, the way to improve attendance rates, and the definition of good quality education (Condy, 1998, p. 10). These participatory approaches are aimed not only towards the reinforcement of horizontal, local-level relations and collaboration, but also towards the enhancement of vertical-level responsiveness, i.e., between the local level articulations or definitions of problems and the policy-level examinations and implementations of such local voices (Kane et al., 1998).

Table 2: Forms of Community Participation

Traditional Forms of Participation

- Communal labor by community to provide infrastructure, such as toilets, school building and workshops;
- Payment of money levied by the chief or elders to finance school projects;
- Search for, or provision of accommodation for teachers;
- Chief, elders or other community members offering rooms in their house to store school property;
- Provision of land for gardening, farming, school building, etc;
- Churches allowing their chapels to be used for classes in cases of inadequate classroom accommodation;
- Parental attendance at PTA meetings;
- Community patronage of school functions such as Speech Days, Open Days, etc;
- Supply of the needs of wards by parents or guardians;
- Involvement of youth in weeding the school's football field where the school children are considered too young to do this.

Extended (New) Forms of Participation

- Participation in management of schools through representations on School Management Committees; community together with a headmaster deciding how school funds should be spent;
- Participation of communities, PTAs and religious bodies in curriculum design; teachers alone or with community carrying out surveys of community resources and/or assessments of local educational needs;
- Participation in actual teaching as resource persons for some culture-oriented themes;
- Participation in the protection and maintenance of school property; parent association levying and collecting extra budgetary resources from parents and community members;
- Supervision and monitoring of pupils' attendance at school;
- Involvement in enrolment drives to increase pupils' access (some Chiefs even trying to compel parents to send their children to school);
- Participation in the form of offering motivation to teachers to improve their performance;
- Participation in the supervision of pupil's studies at home;
- Participation in determining annual school calendars and daily timetables appropriate to family and local community economic cycles.

Source: Derived from Shaeffer, 1992; Condy, 1994; and Baku & Agyeman, 2002

However, in actuality, these progressive and extended forms of community participation are yet to be often applied in nation-scale public school projects, but rather they are only implemented in non-formal and/or small-scale school projects. Except some cases, examples of communities actively participating in curriculum design or teacher inspection are still rare (Condy, 1998; Shaeffer, 1992). It is likely the case that "in practice, community participation is often linked with the ability to mobilize, and make more

efficient use of, resources" (Rose, 2003a, p. 49) while retaining the basic (often hierarchical, rigid, and conservative) structure of educational systems.

Critical Backlash against Participatory Development Approaches

The emergence of participatory development approaches as new methodologies created "waves of enthusiasm and hope" (Rahnema, 1995, p. 122). Participatory development approaches have been "growing quantitatively as well as receiving increasing endorsement from the development cooperation system and in development thinking" (Rahman, 1995, p. 32). The idea of participatory development has started to be, far and wide, appreciated and integrated into the mainstream development programs. In such a climate of the development enterprise, to criticize the ambitious notions of participatory development and community participation might "appear to be ungenerous" (Midgley, 1986, p. 34). Nevertheless, an increasing number of social scientists and development experts are professionally bound to critically examine weaknesses, inconsistencies and difficulties of the ideas and strategies of participation (Midgley, 1986, p. 34). This section is intended to explore some of the problematics in participatory development approaches, drawing on argumentations critical responses presented by previous theorists and scholars. It is to function as an analytical and explorative framework which would enable me to conduct critical analyses of the trend-like idea, discourse and strategy of participatory development.

"Participation is Good": an act of faith

The ideas and principles of community participation and participatory

development approaches are often deemed to be more in theory than in practice. Participation has been criticized as functioning as an act of faith in development (Cleaver, 1999, p. 597). Cohen & Uphoff (1980) argue, for example, that concern with participation has become so popular that one can hardly be against the concept, and that promoting participation becomes good by definition (p. 213). De Kadt (1982) continues that the concept of community participation "has popularity without clarity and is subject to growing faddishness and a lot of lip service" (p. 174). These criticisms against the uncontested popularity and untested efficacy of participatory development approaches have been furthered by the lack of evidences of an attainment of the anticipated transformatory outcomes (Rahnema, 1995; Cleaver, 1999).

Domestication and Marginalization of Radical Faces of Participation

Participatory development approaches have been also criticized for leaving behind its radical and challenging aspects. As Rahman (1995) maintains, "more radical thinking and action toward 'empowerment' and 'liberation' of the people is becoming marginalized" (p. 26). As a consequence, radical conceptual keystones of participation have been technicized and translated into "a managerial exercise based on 'toolboxes' of procedures and techniques" (Cleaver, 1999, p. 608) with participation having been " 'domesticated' away from its radical roots" (Cleaver, 1999, p. 608), and thus "getting lost" (Rahman, 1995, p. 29). Kothari (1993) maintains that the deep cooptation of alternative development approaches has resulted in a capitulation of possible transformatory alternative actions, and therefore, the loss of a critical edge.

One of the causes of such domestication and marginalization is ironically indicated,

some critics would suggest, by the growing popularity of participatory development. That is, the popularity of participatory development has furthered the sporadic implementation and/or integration of the idea of participation by the development enterprise, for which "some previously radical grassroots interventions are even being co-opted by 'development' agencies" (Rahman, 1995, p. 26). In analyzing interventions of many different organizations that sporadically and quantitatively promote participatory development programs, Rahman (1995) questions whether they are surviving in the way that they merely spread themselves thin over a wider geographical area to compensate the 'legitimacy' of their existence (p. 28). In a similar vein, Mayo & Craig (1995) point out the nature of "the contract culture" in development industry as one of the hindrances to maintaining organizations and groups' originally radical identities and mentalities. They (1995) insist that:

> In order to survive in the contract culture, voluntary organizations, both in the North and in the South, are forced to behave in a commercially viable fashion, a competitive process which risks driving the smaller, less commercial and more community-based organizations out of the market, leaving the survivors less and less clearly distinguishable from their private-sector counterparts... [I]n the contract culture the focus has to be upon those services which are clearly specified in the contract, rather than upon broader 'watchdog'-type functions, let alone the advocacy and campaigning functions which historically have been central to genuine community participation (Mayo & Craig, 1995, pp. 7-8).

Also, in some instances, the wide spread activity of NGOs is deemed as one of the fundamental causes of fragmentation and individualization of development projects. Many grassroots projects have been lacking effective collaboration and/or coordination between different NGOs. As a result, the idea of collective action imperative for empowerment or radical transformation and liberation of the status quo has been often diembedded from, and lost in, the life of the projects. Cleaver (1999) maintains that "an essential objective of

participation, its radical, challenging and transformatory edge has been lost" and "the concept of action has become individualized, empowerment depoliticized" (p. 599).

Self-Critiques and Revisionism in the Participatory Development Orthodoxy

In response to various critiques of weaknesses and inconsistencies of lack of participatory development approaches, there have been emerging revisions and re-examinations from advocates of the approaches including practitioners and theorists. Glancing at such voluntary re-examinations and revisions, one might assume that the critiques and suggestions have been sincerely received and critically reflected upon by the advocates. However, in some instances, such re-examinations and reflections end up merely being the constant methodological revisionism rather than the real challenge to more fundamental problems within the discourse of participation (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 1999). Among a number of recent reviews and critiques of participatory development approaches, it is important to distinguish "critique from within the orthodoxy" (or internal critiques) from "critiques of participation" (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 7). Cooke & Kothari (2001) explain that the first form tends to focus solely on technical and methodological limitations of the strategies and try to troubleshoot the problems whereas the latter pays more attention to the theoretical, political, and conceptual limitations of the approaches (p. 5). Careful attention needs to be paid to this distinction. This is especially so because internal critiques have the potential to obscure the continuous structural injustice and various detrimental situations by further legitimizing 'participatory' projects rather than presenting it with a real challenge (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 7).

Lack of Considerations to Wider Social Structures and Patterns

There have also been a number of criticisms against participatory development advocates' obsessions with the local (sometimes, also the social and the civil) as opposed to the political. Mohan & Stokke (2000) problematize "the tendency to view 'the local' in isolation from broader economic and political structures" (p. 249). Such obsessions with the local and negative biases against state involvement have been criticized for potentially causing the uncritical localism, that overlooks injustice and oppression in wider social structures and patterns, and moreover, downplays managerial and political exploitations of participation in actual practices. For instance, criticizing a popular belief in participation as an act of faith, Midgley (1986) insists that "community participation is not a simple matter of faith but a complex issue involving different ideological beliefs, political forces, administrative arrangements and varying perceptions of what is possible" (p. viii).

Many other critics have criticized the rhetoric of participation and the naiveté of assumptions underscoring it. Critically articulated are the problems of naiveté about how the language of empowerment can mask a real concern for managerialist exploitations and "how an emphasis on the micro-level intervention can obscure, and indeed sustain, broader macro-level inequalities and injustice" (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 14). The strategy of participation is also criticized for being effectively abused as a means of compensatory safety-net, obscuring the inherently centralized manipulative and non-participatory aspects of mainstream development programs. Rahman (1995) insists that participatory development is not implemented in such a way that will lead to major structural reforms, and that Southern countries are implementing participatory development sporadically only at the micro-level, which does not redirect the mainstream of development resources to

promote it on a national scale (p. 26). Participatory development, for Rahman (1995), can "play the role at best of 'safety-net' to keep social discontent in check," "to keep poverty within socially tolerable limits" (p. 28).

These critical responses can be deemed as "the search for a radical home" in participatory development approaches (Hickey & Mohan, 2003, p. 12). However, despite the critical responses as these, the principles of participatory development are still in fashion and widely practiced with the continuous support and encouragement from NGOs, governments and international agencies. It seems that many of the critical backlashes have so far failed to "affect, qualitatively or quantitatively, the apparently inexorable spread of participation in development" (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 3). Hickey & Mohan (2003) also admit that despite the continuous efforts to refine and broaden these critiques, they could not affect the ubiquitous spread of participation as a development concept and strategy (p. 5).

Summary

My review of the literature examined the history—the historical geneses, emergence and legitimation processes—of participatory development and community participation approaches in overall international development as well as in education. Participatory development principles were strongly influenced and informed by principles and directions of various historical events/movements such as community development and populist movements. Influence of Freirean theoretical, pedagogical and political philosophies was incredible in its formation and development. Also, the literature review indicated the way participatory development has been mainstreamed into the major

development enterprises as an emerging development paradigm/project. It also pointed out the major forces and mechanisms, i.e., neo-liberal strategies of IFIs and sporadic activities of NGOs, that have been at work in the legitimation and implementation processes of participatory development. Equally in education, community participation approaches have been presented and practiced as one of the most imperative and effective prerequisites for education reform/improvement. The comprehensive literature review also presented some of the problematics around community or grassroots participation, i.e., domestication and marginalization of the radical aspects because of the co-optation, and the lack of considerations of transformations in the wider social structures.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

Introduction

To address the general research questions listed in Chapter 1, documentary analysis is used in this study, drawing particularly on the principles, methods and objectives of critical discourse theory/analysis and critical policy analysis. This chapter provides a description of the study's data analysis methods and methodological choices, and justification for the selections. The researcher's epistemology, ontology and a relevant research paradigm are also clarified.

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a way of looking at the world that guides and directs the researchers' choices of method as well as their ontological and epistemological positions. It is desirable that the researchers clearly situate themselves and that their research paradigms be made clear at the outset because their personal assumptions, attitudes and beliefs inevitably "have important consequence for the practical conduct of inquiry, as well as for the interpretation of findings and policy choice" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 209). Among the five major research paradigms—positivism, post-positivism, emancipatory/critical theory, constructivism/naturalistic inquiry and participatory paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2000), the assumptions of critical theory guide this study. The paradigmatic stance/belief of critical theory yields great insights into my examination of ideas, strategies, policies and projects of participatory development and the ways in which such practices and policies shape, produce and reproduce oppression and inequalities in

the so-called Third World nations. It also parallels the ultimate intention of the study—the confrontation of injustice found in a particular society or in the very act of research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 291).

Ontology

I accept historical realism—the critical theorist view of reality as multiple and virtual realities constructed by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). Considering human history, the complexity of one's social location, and the ambiguity and fluidity of one's identity, I assume that a reality be understood as a multiple construction that is spatially and timely specific. Also, examining the development of social structures and the operation of hegemony and discursive power, I accepted a critical theorist assumption that there are certain 'realities' which can be better understood as false realities rather than true realities. False realities are constructed to determine human practices and preserve oppressive social structures, while being constantly and consistently penetrated into the construction of human psyche and everyday practices—thinking and acting.

Epistemology

Corresponding to my ontological view situated within a critical theory paradigm, I accept a transactional and subjectivist epistemology. Also, I accept a stance that knowledge is socially and historically situated and that knower and would-be known construct knowledge and understandings. This assumption can be connected to the notion of "the social construction of interpretive lenses": critical theorist researchers assume that

the consciousness and the interpretive frames they bring to the research are historically situated, constantly changing and ever evolving in relationships to the cultural and ideological climate (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 287). While I, as a researcher, was cognizant of my possible possession of such interpretive lenses, I was also aware that it would be almost inevitable that I project my own bias, values and knowledge into the interpretation of findings in the current research. It would be desirable at the outset that I make clear my assumption with which I am consciously analyzing the data. This assumption is relative to, and to some extent informed by, the statement made by White (1996):

> Participation must be seen as political. There are always tensions underlying issues such as who is involved, how, and on whose terms. While participation has the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, it may also be the means through which existing power relations are entrenched and reproduced. The arenas in which people perceive their interests and judge whether they can express them are not neutral. Participation may take place for a whole range of unfree reasons. It is important to see participation as a dynamic process, and to understand that its own form and function can become a focus for struggle (p. 6).

Methodological Choice

For methodological choices, qualitative methodology is considered most suitable for the current research. Marshall & Rossman (1999) indicate the types and characteristics of research that are suitable for qualitative research methods (p. 57):

(1) Research that delves in depth into complexities and processes;

(2) Research on little-known phenomena or innovative systems;

(3) Research that seeks to explore where and why policy and local knowledge and practice are at odds;

(4) Research on informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations;

(5) Research on real, as opposed to stated, organizational goals;

(6) Research that cannot be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons; and

(7) Research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified.

Johnson & Christensen (2000) suggest that qualitative researcher study a phenomenon in an open-ended way and develop hypotheses and theoretical explanations based on their interpretations of what they observe (p. 312). I regard qualitative research methods to be most suitable for this current study, considering these dimensions and the nature and types of the study that (1) delves in depth into complexities; (2) examines "informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations"; and (3) explores "real, as opposed to stated, organizational goals" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 57).

Selection of a Specific Qualitative Method

A specific research method I am deploying in the study is documentary analysis drawing particularly on critical discourse analysis and critical policy analysis. The selection of these methods took place in consideration with timeline, purposes of the research and the nature of the research questions. Concerning the timeline of the research, the core research period is from December 2003 to June 2004. This relatively limited timeline is one of the reasons why the study focuses primarily on data that have been documented, and thus are available and relatively easily attainable in one particular location I conduct analyses.

Moreover, the selection of the methods was carefully made, considering the nature of the research questions and the relevance to the purposes of the research. Particularly, documentary analysis is effective in articulating organizational examinations,

interpretations and presentations of some particular concepts and/or policies. For instance, in order to address the research questions, a careful examination and, if needed, a comparison/contrast of organizational texts are considered effective in articulating uncontested, misplaced assumptions possessed by those organizations of participatory development/community participation approaches.

Now, when analyzing a text, it is imperative to understand the contexts in which it was produced and read. It is equally important to examine the real (or hidden), as opposed to merely stated or propagated, argumentations and intentions of the documents. Having articulated the appropriateness of qualitative methodology for the study, I, as a qualitative researcher, believe that "the meaning of a text resides in the minds of its writer and its readers" (Gall et al., 2003, p. 282). Therefore, as Gall et al. (2003) maintain, to comprehensively understand a text, I am cognizant of the importance to "study the context in which it was produced—the author's purpose in writing it, the author's working conditions, the author's intended and actual audience, and the audience's purpose for reading it" (p. 282).

To better inform and foster such comprehensive analyses, the study deploys the principles and methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and critical policy analysis (CPA). This selection or combination is based on a consideration and expectation of explanative and explorative possibilities with depth and breadth of these critical research approaches. It is presumed that these methods enable me to (1) explore "the ways in which economic, social, political, and cultural context shape both the content and language of policy documents" (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 44); and (2) reveal "the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of unequal power relations with the overall goal of harnessing

the results of critical discourse analysis to the struggle for radical social change" (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 64).

When selecting these critical analyst approaches that specifically look at policies and discourses, I acknowledge various different functions of participatory development and community participation, i.e., paradigmatic, textual, political, theoretical and discursive functions and underpinnings. Thus, it is assumed that participatory development and community participation can be effectively analyzed by CPA and CDA as policy and discourse, and if needed, as something larger than such notions.

In CPA, policy is considered more than a specific policy document or text. Taylor et al. (1997) explain policy as both "process and product" (p. 24). That is, policy involves complex, multi-layered processes of (1) the production of the text, (2) the text itself, (3) ongoing modifications to the text, and (4) process of implementation into practice (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 24). For Bowe et al. (1992), these complex, interactive processes are defined as the "policy cycle," that has three interrelated contexts: (1) the context of policy text production, (2) the context of practice, and (3) the context of influence. These analytical and interpretative frameworks presented by the policy analysts would enable me to deconstruct the texts and potentially explore political struggles and conflicts of (political) power over textual meanings.

To strengthen the analyses in this course, the principle of discourse theory particularly rooted in Foucauldian approaches is also deployed as it can be used to examine differences in terminology used, the ways they reflect the particular historical and cultural context, and possible implications they have for the ways in which relevant concepts are used and understood (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 44). Furthermore, among a number of critical

discourse analysts, the study is rooted in the principles and methods of the researchers like Fairclough and Wodak. This is especially because of their recognitions of language/text as social practice, and their articulations of discourse being in a dialectical relationship with other social domains, in which "discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). Also, CDA is considered appropriate for the study situated in the critical theory paradigm especially for the study's foundational root, that is politically committed to social transformation for oppressed social groups. Finally, in situating this research within the critical theory paradigm, and considering these methodological possibilities that can be opened up by the listed methods, the selection and combination of these methods are considered appropriate to address the research questions.

Data Collection and Analysis

As explained above, the forms of data collection for the study are limited to records and a few documents, exclusive of other sources of data such as interviews, questionnaires and direct observation. According to Lincoln & Guba's (1985) definition, documents are written communications prepared for personal rather than official reasons while records have an official purpose in being written and documented (cited in Gall et al., 2003). Here to avoid any possible confusion, it should be noted that although the term, 'documentary' analysis, is used above to specify the research method, it is primarily organizational records and official texts that are collected and analyzed for the study. Moreover, as in the naming of data sources used in a historical research, it may be useful to indicate a use of primary and secondary sources in the current study. First, a primary source is a record

which was "generated by people who personally witnessed or participated in the historical events of interest," i.e., a personal diary and a relic (Gall et al., 2003, p. 521). Second, a secondary source is a document in which an individual gives an interpretation of primary sources and other secondary sources (Gall et al., 2003, p. 521). The study deploys these two forms of data sources.

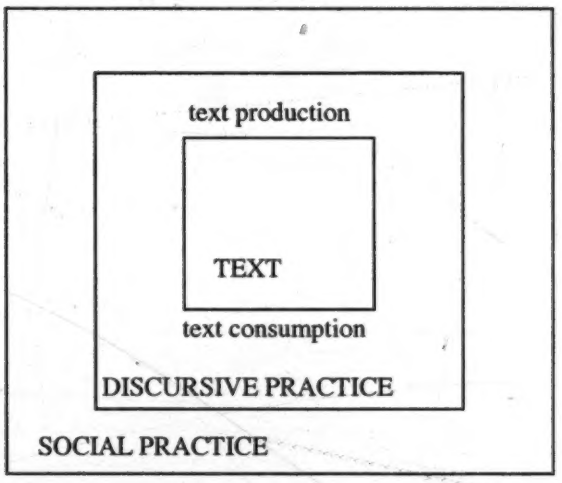
To confirm interpretations based on data obtained from the sources, the study draws on Hodder's (1994) five criteria in the data collection and analysis processes:

1. Internal coherence, meaning that different parts of the theoretical argument do not contradict one other and the conclusions follow from the premises;
2. External coherence, meaning that the interpretation fits theories accepted in and outside the discipline;
3. Correspondence between theory and data;
4. The fruitfulness of the theoretical suppositions, that is, how many new directions, lines of inquiry, or perspectives are opened up; and
5. the trustworthiness, professional credentials, and status of the author and supporters of an interpretation.

Furthermore, in conducting policy/organizational text analyses, the study follows the principles of Codd's (1988) traditional policy analysis: "policy documents...are ideological texts which have been constructed in a particular context. The task of deconstruction begins with a recognition of that context" (pp. 243-244). Thus, the researcher pays careful attention to "both the background and context of policies, including their historical antecedents and relations with other texts, and the short- and longer-term impacts of policies in practice" (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 44). Also, somewhat

similar to the Codd's formulation, the study is informed by Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA especially because the model is considered effective in depicting the relationship between text and context (see Figure 1). The model is framed on the ground that texts can never be understood or analyzed in isolation, but can only be understood in relation to other texts and the social context (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 70).

Figure 1: Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA



Source: Adapted from Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002 (Figure 3.1, p. 68)

Phillips & Jørgensen (2002) explain: "The analysis should focus, then, on (1) the linguistic features of the text (text), (2) processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice); and (3) the wider social practice to which the communicative event belongs (social practice)" (p. 68).

Summary

This chapter described the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions, as well as articulating the study's research paradigm as the critical theory paradigm. It also offered rationales for the selection of qualitative research methodology as its foundational

approach, and the use of documentary analysis drawing on methods and principles of critical policy analysis and critical discourse analysis (selectively frameworks of Fairclough and Wodak) as specific analysis methods. The selections and combinations of the methods are made in consideration with timeline, the research purposes and the nature of the research questions. It is assumed that these methods would make possible the explorations of the ways in which discursive social practices in wider contexts condition the context of the text production, and shape the text, its content and language.

Chapter 4: Paradoxes and Misplaced Assumptions of Community Participation in Education

Introduction

While catering to the idea of community participation in education with great optimistic anticipations, many stakeholders and educational experts have not fully questioned the logic of assumptions underscoring community participation approaches. Some of the assumptions are often too optimistic, blindly held, and misplaced. They cannot be thus accepted at face value. In an attempt to understand and critically analyze the move toward increased community and parental participation in education, it is crucial to examine such uncontested assumptions and rationale. To overlook these misplaced assumptions could result in the abuse of people's participation, the investment in an unattainable illusion, and the thrust to the already impoverished and oppressed population. This chapter examines some of the major assumptions, rationale, and likely implications that appear predominant in various policy documents and strategic manuals focused on community participation in education. Major problematic assumptions embedded in such policies and strategies are categorized into five sections: (1) myths of community—local power relations and issues of representative participation; (2) local knowledge input through community participation—how effective and how genuine?; (3) complexities in community members' participation, motivation and commitment; (4) contradictions between principles and realities of ruralized curriculum; (5) debate on educational decentralization—a structure for community participation or containerization? It is intended that the detailed examinations and micro-analyses of the assumptions, contradictions and tensions offer the descriptions and explorations, with respect to the

research questions, of the detrimental causal factors that widen the fault-line between blueprints/premises and realities, and also the educational as well as socio-economic implications/consequences of such community-based education programs.

Myths of Community

There is a tendency to romanticize "community" as one place consisting of people with solidarity, consensus and the same interests. When community involvement and participation is referred to in policy documents or strategic manuals, the concept of community is not formally defined, or when defined, it ends up poorly defined and loosely used to denote a socio-spatial entity (Midgley, 1986, p. 24). Such an ambiguous use of the terms "community" and "locals" could obscure the importance of micro-politics and power relations in a community. It is extremely important to recognize local power relations, processes of conflict and negotiation, and those of inclusion and exclusion, especially when community participation in educational reform is aimed at increasing involvement of those who have been hitherto politically, culturally, and economically marginalized in educational decision-making and denied access to resources and power.

Community Context and Characteristics: differences among communities

It should be first noted that community can be a very flexible concept which refers to different boundaries under different circumstances. They can be defined or clustered by various factors such as law, geography, culture, language, class and caste (Shaeffer, 1991, p. 22). Therefore, even in the same areas/neighborhoods, variations of characteristics and natures among different communities are evident. Shaeffer (1991) illustrates such

differences among communities:

> They can be heterogeneous or homogeneous, united or conflictive, poor or rich, sunk in fatalism or vibrant with optimism... they can be governed and managed by leaders chosen democratically (informally or through formal channel), or by leaders imposed from above and representing central authorities. Many communities, especially in disadvantaged areas, lack homogeneous social units and even informal local organizations which might be mobilized for greater participation (p. 22).

There are various other disparities in communities' characteristics, which are either detrimental or conducive to participation. In some communities, the idea of collaborative community activities may have been traditionally embedded and well preserved, whereas in other communities, people may not be used to the idea of working together with other community members. Also, some communities may have stronger tradition of schooling than others, which may largely influence the levels of commitment and interest of community members participating in their school programs. The overall literacy level is also different among communities. Community-based projects are sometimes confronted with the inherent illiteracy of the majority of community members, thus sometimes hindering effective communication and interactive relationships between stakeholders. Additionally, the socio-economic status of community, in particular, is often considered as one of the important factors that determines the success of community-based projects.

Nevertheless, the reality shows that many of the community-based development projects are implemented across regions and communities in a very similar way, regardless of the socio-economic status of communities (Rose, 2003a, p. 59). For regional variations as mentioned above, development project planners and educational reformers need to be more self-critical to understand that one project that seems to be a success in one community within one particular context may not necessarily be efficient and feasible in other communities within different contexts.

Differences within a Community and Local Power Relations

As mentioned earlier, communities are "neither homogenous in composition and concerns, nor necessarily harmonious in their relations" (Guilt & Kaul Shah, 1999, p. 8). Nelson & Wright (1995) maintain that "Community is a concept often used by state and other organizations rather than the people themselves, and it carries connotations of consensus and 'needs' determined within parameters set by outsiders" (p. 15). The simplification of community and "locals" as one homogenous group would become a smokescreen for which various intra-community differences, struggle, conflicts and power relations can be easily obscured and overlooked. Differences can occur with respect to various clusters such as age, gender, wealth, ethnicity, language, culture and race, which can in turn become strong elements for inequality, oppressive social hierarchies or discrimination in a community. It is, therefore, extremely important to acknowledge the complex clusters of intra-community power and social relations.

However, it should be noted here that when we start acknowledging and examining these differences in community, we tend to only focus on the conflicts along structurally determined lines (socio-economic, ethnic/racial, and gender line). Goebel (1998) maintains that by analyzing the power relations according to such groups as men and women, or "elites" and "commoners," researchers could overlook other important divisions or clusters (p. 284). For example, even when we draw a line along "woman," there are huge differences and diversities. Cornwall (1999) insists, "rich and poorer women not only have a range of concerns and priorities; their experiences of being a woman are also different" (p. 50). Similarly, referring to the "poor," Torres & Fischman (1994) emphasize "not only class origin or position, but also other sources of identity

including race/ethnicity, regional origin, nationality, religion, gender, and sexual orientation overlap and intersect in the constitution of the identity of the 'poor'" (p. 86). These differences and complexities should be critically addressed to prevent them from disappearing into "the melting pot of an 'average community plan'" (Guijt & Kaul Shah, 1998, p. 8).

Not to continue to romanticize communities, it would be crucial to recognize the darker side of "traditional" communities including local power relations and various other forms of oppressive constraints. Even when local people seem to be strongly tied to each other in solidarity, there could also exist severe competition for power and leadership among them. The close relationship to the ruling group or wealthy group often emerges as important in the face of such an intra-community power play. Similarly, especially in traditional communities, what often forms the power relations are the "traditional" customs or customary social systems such as totem and clan, witchcraft, and authorities, that are mostly chiefs, both traditional and state-appointed administrative (Fisiy & Geschiere, 1996; Goebel, 1998). In some instances, these normalized traditional customs and social systems can be the very foundation of local power relations that are oppressive and restrictive to a certain group of people. It is thus a mistake to simplify and romanticize a community as one harmonious place where people are all naturally collaborative and equally respectful of each other.

Local Power Relations and Problematics around Participation

This raises the question of who participates in a community. Community participation in educational reform is sometimes simply and narrowly equated with an

establishment of local committee boards or community associations. Often anticipated by community-based participatory development circles is that opinions raised in such "community meetings" reflect and represent even the perspectives of marginal groups in a community. Based on this misplaced assumption, they continue to call for the establishment of community meetings as the forum for educational decision-making. For example, in the design of the USAID-sponsored Quality Improvements in the Primary Schools (QUIPS) Programs in Ghana, greater community involvement in local education is anticipated through assistance to local school associations and committees. Although USAID is reported as one of the organizations that have worked directly with field personnel to capture hands-on experience, the level of consultation has been based on pre-determined and limited levels of stakeholder consultation (Mettle-Nunoo & Hilditch, 2000, p. 19). Considering the local micro-politics and complex social relations, such a form of local representation could be merely the *pseudo*-form of representation and participation.

Here, the idea of representative community involvement becomes problematic because those who are elected as committee members are often the better-off, better educated, and thus those who are already in influential positions. There is also a situation, as Pottier & Orone (1995) articulate, where the chiefs of the community deliberately fail to invite the very poor to the community meetings. As long as a small group of individuals entitled as "local representatives" remains the only "local" resource in projects, such projects may not be able to identify what community members want from their school and what their definition of a good school is. Moreover, even when rhetorically presented as a genuine form of local representation, community participation/involvement only through

community meetings that tend to favor decisions made by village elite would help retain the existing local hierarchy and injustice in village social relations.

Additionally, even when the community discussion achieves the inclusion of community members from various power divisions, the process may still lack democracy, inclusivity, and fair representation. For instance, even if marginalized groups, i.e., women, landless, or low-caste people, are physically present during discussion, they may not necessarily be given an opportunity to express their views to the same extent as others. They may not be willing, or comfortable and confident enough to express their opinions. Furthermore, in educational decision-making process, even when the active participation of women is achieved to some extent, it does not necessarily mean that their opinions are always supportive for the betterment of girls' educational opportunities. For examples, in the case of Ghana, the cultural practice of kinship, fostering and adoption sometimes result in a situation where relatives withdraw their foster children, mostly girls, from schools to have them instead work home as maids or babysitters, or to send them somewhere for additional income (Stephens, 2000). Implicit here is the possibility that some female participants can speak against girl's education, especially when they are in need of their immediate contributions at home.

Local Input through Participation: how effective?

This section focuses on one of the foundational assumptions of educational decentralization and community participation in educational reform, namely "the cultures of learning" rationale (Weiler, 1989, p. 11). This rationale is closely related to the quest for relevance between content of curricula/schooling and out-of-school lives or local value

systems. Shifts in official development priorities, from top-down paradigm to bottom-up development approach, have implied greater concerns with the problems of how to provide greater sensitivity to local variations and especially of how to "make school learning more directly relevant to the needs of the majority of pupils who do not continue to higher stages of schooling" (Lauglo & McLean, 1985, p. 17). Widely appreciated was the idea of active local input in defining and planning of learning content and environment to produce a desirable correspondence between educational content and local needs and value systems. Implicit to this strategy is the idea that communities can define their needs and effectively apply their knowledge to the planning of reform projects.

Working against these claims, however, are the various counterarguments about such premises and over-optimism concerning the efficacy and legitimacy of community participation for worthwhile local input. The report on the Schooling Improvement Fund (Condy, 1998), for instance, indicates community members' lack of sufficient pedagogical understanding and limits to how far community involvement can achieve the goal of improving quality of teaching and learning. Similarly, Chapman et al.'s (2002), "Do communities know best? Testing a premise of educational decentralization," examines the extent to which community members in rural Ghana demonstrate an understanding of effective schools and their roles in supporting their school reform projects. Their findings suggest that community members have not given much thought to important issues in their schools (Chapman et al., 2002).

Constitution of Self-confessed Participatory Projects

What should be first questioned here, however, may not be the legitimacy and

efficacy of community participation or local input, per se, but rather, the constitutions of self-confessed "community-based projects." In various cases, community participation has been made part of "community-based" educational projects only to satisfy and stand for the inclusion of social dimensions in projects. Some of them tend to managerially and technocratically set limits on local people's participation by sectionizing and extractively pre-defining the degree and form of local participation. Working against the ultimate goals of community ownership and empowerment, such projects minimize the opportunity and incentive for community members to understand their needs and to define, on their part, what constitutes effective schooling environment and educational content.

Certainly, tight project deadlines, often pre-determined in project agendas, become a deterrent that prevent community participants from making critical analyses of their priorities and needs. While effective community participation is predicated on people's awareness, such strict time frames can hinder participants from devoting a sufficient amount of time to discuss and analyze problems, and define their priorities and the roles they can play. A possible consequence of these circumstances is that local people would become "good customers" with enhanced "claim-making" capacities (Botchway, 2001, p.135), where they only ask for products that can be easily delivered and that are mentioned, or preferred, by outsiders. In addition, projects that fail to allow community participants to define their priority needs also inhibit community members from acquiring "a stronger position in which to generate revenue through a re-organization of their socioeconomic environment" (Botchway, 2001, p. 147), and from gaining the capacity to continuously challenge and tackle possible problems emerging in the future. Impatient projects that do not allow adequate time will hardly achieve sustainability.

Furthermore, a careful consideration is needed to acknowledge the importance of thinking and reflecting at a community level in various processes of projects. Thinking and reflecting can encourage community members to discuss the problems in their schools and form their own indicators of effective schooling based on their priorities. Chapman et al. (2002) maintain that "community members need a reason and an opportunity to shape, clarify, and refine their thinking about the adequacy of their local schools" (p. 186). Failing to allow projects adequate time for this important stage would result in a return to "conventional wisdom," that is an implementation of outsider-based indicators. They continue to insist that:

> there is a risk that widespread community participation in contexts in which citizens do not have a well-grounded understanding of the educational process may draw on conventional wisdom more than empirical fact about what promotes learning... Consensus based on misguided conventional wisdom can result in subsequent investments in things that do not have the intended effects in raising school quality (Chapman et al., 2002, pp. 186-187).

It may be, however, naïve to assume that if community members are given adequate time, reason and opportunity, they would be capable to solve any problem at schools. It is reported that sometimes it is more appropriate for teachers rather than community members to participate in developing local projects to enhance teaching methods and techniques (Condy, 1998, p. 31). Therefore, it is of great importance to articulate and clarify what aspect of decisions can be realistically improved by community input and by other stakeholders.

It would be, however, equally problematic to assume the complete division of roles and labors (e.g., complete split of roles between schools and community). Negative implications could be that the devaluation of the community's pedagogical capacity and knowledge result in the complete denial and block-out of community involvement in

school management. Occasionally, there are some instances where decisions are most often made only by teachers, with other members of the communities only passively taking on responsibilities and roles prescribed and handed over by schools (Rose, 2003a, p. 55). With a reference to school-community relationships frequently identified in a Malawian context, Rose (2003a) illustrates a form of extractive, one-way community participation (see Figure 2):

> [Once] a development project had been proposed by the school and approved by the school committee, the committee would inform the chiefs or village headmen within the school catchment area. Village headmen were then responsible for informing the community and making the arrangements for mobilizing their contributions... The evidence suggests that schools frequently do not have direct contact with the community, but rather community contributions to primary schools are provided indirectly via village headmen (p. 55).

This kind of limited community participation can result not only in the misuse of "participatory" projects but also in the abuse of the concept of participation, while contributing to the perpetuation of a top-down decision-making paradigm rather than its transformation.

Figure 2: Relationship between school and community

School/Head Teacher	**School Committee**	**Village Headman**	**Community**
Proposes project	Approves project and informs village headman	Informs community and mobilizes contributions	Provides contribution to village headman

Source: Adapted from Rose, 2003a (Fig. 1, p. 55)

Intra-community Power Relations and Normalized Knowledge

Inadequate local input can also occur even when community members seem to be actively involved and appropriately treated in a wide range of project phases. In several instances, what is presented and embraced as community's needs for their school

predicated on "local knowledge" may be only the products of the cultural and social norms. Such a form of "local knowledge" may contain the seeds of preservation of the status-quo and "traditional" normalized knowledge, that are not truly shared or appreciated by all community members. While many of the ambitious reform projects aim to achieve the transformation and re-organization of educational environment toward more sustainable, effective and equitable environment, input of false local knowledge has the potential to not only work against the goals of such projects but also legitimize the inequality and the prevailing social relations of oppression, exploitation and exclusion.

First, it might be important to examine how "local knowledge" could be tactically and manipulatively formed to such an extent that it is almost embraced as "true local knowledge." In many instances, there is a dominant group that directs and rules various aspects of community/local lives, even within such complex local power relations. They are the ones who are able to produce and define local knowledge with their power. As Gramsci (1971) indicates, in hegemonic formations, "a dominant social group is able to win, to secure, and to cement the consent of subordinate ones in order to neutralize them" (p. 161). This type of shaped knowledge could be more specifically understood as a dominant discourse rather than as local knowledge of true neutrality. For Brookfield (2001), "a dominant discourse comprises a particular language, a distinctive worldview in which some things are regarded as inherently more important or true than others, a set of concepts that are held in common by those participating in discourse"(p. 14). Fiske (1989) also writes:

> Knowledge is power, and the circulation of knowledge is part of the social distribution of power. The discursive power to construct a commonsense reality that can be inserted into cultural and political life is ventral in the social relationship of power. The power of knowledge has to struggle to exert itself in two dimensions. The first is

> to control the "real," to reduce reality to the knowable, which entails producing it as a discursive construct... The second struggle is to have this discursively (and therefore socio-politically) constructed reality accepted as truth by those whose interests may not necessarily be served by accepting it. Discursive power involves a struggle both to construct (a sense of) reality and to circulate that reality as widely and smoothly as possible throughout society (pp. 149-50).

However, when aiming to identify and overcome the tactical creation of regimes of truth and real local knowledge, the solution is not simply the identification of a dominant group, the producer of knowledge. This is because "to have the discursively constructed reality accepted as truth" and "to circulate that reality as widely and smoothly as possible throughout society," there should be a mechanism of internationalization, normalization and reproduction in all the social relations within a community.

This mechanism would be better understood with Foucault's analysis of power and knowledge. For Foucault (1980), knowledge is not something that people intrinsically have or own because the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and knowledge constantly induces effects of power (p. 52). In addition, the possessors of the power are not limited to one particular group such as the states, the rich, or the intellectuals, but rather, power can be found in every dimension of our daily lives and interactions. Foucault (1980) insists:

> Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation (p. 98).

Because power exists in "a net-like organization," it is everywhere, and we all live in the nexus of power relations. In light of this, knowledge, which is created upon such power relations, can be more appropriately understood as something that has been, and is being,

planned, shaped, produced, and reproduced by everyday life of community members in the entire social nexus. People unknowingly absorb, internalize and assure such a creation, believing it as their rituals, tradition and culture. In this way, knowledge can become a powerful normative construct and one powerful social control device. In a similar vein, Kothari (2001) maintains that "social control is not restricted to particular sites and locations, policies and practices but also colonizes the individual's body. That is, an individual's behavior, actions and perceptions are all shaped by the power embedded and embodied within society" (p. 144). Considering these complexities in local knowledge creation, when encouraging community participation through local input, it is extremely important to examine and question whether what is embraced as "local knowledge" or "local culture" is not merely social/cultural norms or dominant discourses.

For instance, it is said that in some African societies, women are not the equals of men and that they should be content with family duties and submissive to the demands of custom (Adjibade, 1996, p. 91). Some forms of "tradition" and "custom" can become the substantial weight on women's life, and more specifically in educational term, girls' educational opportunity. For example, in the case of Northern Ghana, where it has almost become a belief that a girl should marry as a virgin, people tend to feel that if a girl pursues education for too long, she will lose her virginity on the way (Stephens, 2000, p. 35). One of the potential detrimental factors against effective and equitable local input is this sort of normatively and customarily possessed scornful perceptions toward schooling, especially schooling for girls. Regarding girls' education, Stephens (2000) reports a comment made by one of the elders in a community of Northern Ghana:

> A taste of schooling makes them rebels. If she gets to a higher class and especially if she is a bit grown she refuses to farm and will prefer loitering about especially if it is

her wish not to leave school because her schooling cannot be catered for (p. 36). Education "reform" projects that fail to acknowledge this complex mechanism, could only lead to the tyrannical reproduction of similar educational environment or learning content.

"Planning Knowledge": officially shaped local knowledge

The last section looks at how cultural and social norms and dominant discourses could be equated with, and embraced as, "local knowledge" as a result of internalization and normalization in the nexus of social relations in a community. There is also another form of tactically shaped local knowledge—"planning knowledge" that is shaped by outsiders, mostly by the most powerful and influential actors such as development project agencies, consulting organizations and donor organizations. Even in people-centered participatory projects, these powerful actors still often shape, plan and initiate the projects. It is, however, not only the project content that they can shape, but also "local knowledge" or "local needs and interests." This section examines how and through what kind of interventions local knowledge can be shaped by "non-locals."

First, shaping of local knowledge (including analysis of problems, needs and plans) is very much intertwined with agendas and assumptions of development agencies and the interests of donors. These factors have a great impact upon program or project's priorities and emphases, which include (1) tangible/quantifiable achievement based upon the spirit of result-based management, (2) the short-term benefit making, (3) local resource management and cost recovery, and (4) proper use and delivery of funds (Mosse, 2001, pp. 17-22). In order to nicely meet and smoothly conduct such agenda, outsiders occasionally come to produce a peculiar type of local knowledge and local needs. By shaping and

labeling it as "local people's knowledge," they successfully demonstrate that they are providing what people need, while concealing the fact that they are only providing what they are able to provide. According to Mosse (2001), this sort of knowledge "would be more correctly referred to as 'planning knowledge' rather than 'people's knowledge'" (p.21). Planning knowledge is often a tactical translation of peculiar local interests held by a local dominant group into "generally held local knowledge." It would be here useful to highlight some features of planning knowledge. Drawing on Mosse's (2001) explanations, planning knowledge can be understood as being (1) shaped by agency's objectives and local dominant group interests, (2) conditioned by the desire for concrete benefits in the short term, (3) to ensure consistency with project-defined models, and (4) to match project priorities. Planning knowledge is thus to serve to "further legitimize (the official) discourse with farmer (locals) testimonies" (Christoplos, 1995, p. 18) even if, in realities, it is "testimonies" of merely one dominant group.

However, there is also a situation where researchers feel obliged to skip a process of examining true local knowledge and true people's needs because of the pressure to get things done. In many instances, they are under a variety of constraints and pressures from both organizational systems and local people's expectations. First, as has been discussed earlier, institutional systems and norms reflecting agency or donor's organizational agendas, project models and procedure, can also be huge constraints for researchers. Especially, the strictly set timelines and desired (quantifiable) achievement may easily deter researchers from exploring, in depth and breadth, local people's diverse ways of life, value system, skills, and knowledge.

In addition, local people's expectations can also become a form of pressure.

However, fundamentally, local people's expectations should be the very elements that accurately speak about their needs, interests and demands. Nevertheless, when people's expectations for tangible results are too high or when people are too much result-based, their expectations can be the very source of intervention, which furthers the distortion of local knowledge. For example, the acceptability of researchers' and practitioners' presence in a village is, in some instances, largely based on benefits they can deliver, or promised to deliver (Mosse, 2001, p. 23). If practitioners cannot contribute to make any tangible and concrete benefit, local people may start looking at them as under-performing. In this sense, to try to be *too* participatory, spending time in investigating people's real needs or planning a detailed design for projects is not always appreciated by local people. To avoid this devaluation, researchers end up revisiting the conventional research methods—less participatory and more heavily researcher-centered.

Participation, Motivation, and Commitment Examined

In the discourses of community participation or educational decentralization, there seems to be a strong assumption regarding community members' high level of commitment and willingness. This belief is simply that community members, once given an opportunity to assume a leading role, will become equally motivated and committed to their school improvement activities. It parallels Weiler's (1990) analysis that "in return for a greater role in the making of educational decisions, [the community] is expected to express a stronger sense of commitment to the overall educational enterprise by generating added resources for school construction and maintenance, teacher salaries, and the like" (p. 437). Most expectations and assumptions seem to be well built upon the belief in local

people as social beings and popular demands for schooling. For instance, the World Bank, in its review of "Priorities and Strategies for Education," explains that:

> Public schools should not, of course, be prohibited from mobilizing resources, in cash or in kind, from local communities when public financing is inadequate and such extra resources constitute the only means of achieving quality… Cost-sharing with communities is normally the only exception to free basic education. Even very poor communities are often willing to contribute toward the cost of education, especially at the primary level (World Bank, 1995, p. 105).

However, in realities, these premises may not play out in such a straightforward way. This section takes a closer look at two major premises: (1) high level of interests, motivation and commitment of community members; and (2) continuous popular demand for schooling. My discussion also examines community members' allegiances to their community school and their perceptions of community financing as a way of cost sharing.

High Motivation, Interest, and Commitment: locals = social beings?

First, I analyze the assumption that community members are willing to participate in educational development projects. Underlying this may be the theory of rational economic men. Participants in development projects are somehow viewed and seen as the "social beings" who are committed to achieve public goods with strong responsibilities. Cleaver (2001) explains:

> [It] is assumed that people will find it in their rational interests to participate, due to the assurance of benefits to ensue (particularly in relation to "productive" projects) or, to a much lesser extent, because they perceive this as socially responsible and in the interests of community development as a whole (particularly in relation to public goods projects) (p. 48).

There might be some communities where traditions of self-help and socialistic ideas of participation and collaboration are deeply embedded and more frequently practiced. In such places, community members are actively involved in their school construction,

maintenance or governance via monetary and/or non-monetary contributions. However, consequences are not always the same. As Cleaver (1999) insists, we have to better understand "the non-project nature of people's lives" and conditions where "individuals find it easier, more beneficial, or habitually familiar not to participate" (p. 607). In some cases, community members feel reluctant to provide their labor for free, and, instead of offering time and labor, decide to provide financial contributions. The reason may be simply that "community work competes with time that they could spend for their own survival in the fields or in income-generating activities" (Rose, 2003a, p. 60). As Cleaver (1999) notes:

> For example poor young women with small children commonly find it difficult to publicly participate in development projects due to their burden of productive and reproductive activities. However, some individual women actively find ways of participating through engagement with NGOs and new associational activities whilst others meet their needs in different ways...(p. 607).

In other cases, people participate and provide contributions in order to avoid being fined. Accounts of participation of community members in the Schooling Improvement Fund (SIF) program in Ghana well illustrates this feature:

> The SIF pilot did manage to generate a considerable degree of involvement and interest from community members. Community commitment to education was demonstrated through participation...in drawing up the SIF plans and through their 20 per cent contributions to the cost of the project, a combination of labour and money contributions. But although most of them had engaged in communal labour, in many instances people reported that they had only engaged in this work because they were obliged to or would be fined if they did not, which does not of itself demonstrate much of a sense of real commitment and ownership of their school (Condy, 1998, pp. 9-10).

In light of this, it can be suggested that costs and benefits of participation fall differently and are perceived by people in different social locations in different ways (Cleaver, 1999, p. 607). People might be participating in their projects less as a matter of choice, but more as a matter of necessity. In addition, how individuals become motivated to participate can be

affected by the degree of other benefactors' commitments and involvement in projects. For example, teachers' commitments to projects could be one of the incentives for community members. Condy (1998) argues that "the participation of communities tends to be elicited and solicited through the greater commitment, motivation and success of the teacher involvement in improving schooling" (p. 19). When identifying school problems, for instance, community members tend to rely on teachers to inform them of the problems. At the best, it would lead to positive interdependence, and productive collaborative interplay between schools and communities; however, at the worst, when collaborative, interactive and respectful relationships are absent, or are not pursued, communities can end up being passive recipients of decisions and responsibilities pre-defined and handed over by schools. In a similar vein, it is also possible that once communities begin to receive subsidies and financial support from governments and/or aid agencies, they start to refuse the provision of further contributions because they believe that these institutions come to deal with the situation and take on their responsibilities (Rose, 2003a, p. 58). These possibilities show the fluid and changeable state of local people's motivations and commitments. Community participation should be thus understood as an on-going, therefore changing, process of actions undertaken by individuals with different psychological motivations, interests and needs.

Allegiances to the School Community: problematics

Many of the community-based education reform projects often set their target areas on a basis of school communities or similar units of clusters/divisions. It is often assumed that a school community that corresponds to a residential area should be the most effective

unit with cohesiveness and commitment. However, a school community is not necessarily one cohesive cluster or social entity consisting of people full of interests in, and commitments to, "their school." Thus, the complexities around community members' allegiances to their school community need to be carefully examined. To explain a common constitution of school community, Baku & Agyeman (2002) claim that each school community generally consists of several elements including the traditional or political leadership of the area, the parent-teacher associations, the Town Development Committees, NGOs in the area, the various religious bodies and the generality of the residents (p. 133).

Nevertheless, Condy (1998) views a school community not as an entity, but rather as a concept and notion. For one reason, especially in rural areas, if a school community is spread in a wide area, it becomes a detrimental factor against the goal of achieving increased commitments to the school. Local dwellers cohesiveness and strong allegiances do not necessarily occur as naturally as expected. Furthermore, it is also likely that parents choose to send their children to schools that are not in their communities or original school communities. This is very much intertwined with people's recognition and awareness of the wealth of other school communities in other places. Generally, the socio-economic divisions of a nation often correspond to residential areas; therefore, the wealth of school communities and availability of community funding is likely to differ from area to area. Scadding (1989) illustrates the reality of educational disparities in Ghana:

> The northern sector of Ghana, for example, like the north of Britain, is more deprived than the south... Furthermore, 'educated' Ghanaians often live in close proximity to each other, near large educational establishments, and as in Britain, such parents fund their children's education generously... [It] is not uncommon to visit one school that is literally a series of empty, dusty rooms and then enter a neighbouring school that has an equipped staff-room, supplies of wood and tools and wall displays! (p. 47).

Parents in rural communities are not blind to these disparities of educational quality and availability. They have formed an image that urban schools are better than their rural community schools. Condy (1998) continues that parents in the central Ghana often send some of their children to live with relatives in urban areas, so that their children can benefit from what might be a better school (p. 35). It is likely that these parents could "fail to get involved with 'their' school," thus being "less committed to assisting in the development of their own village school"(Condy, 1998, p. 35). This means that the concepts of "school community" and parent responsibility and commitments to a particular village school, that are generally the basic premises of community-based projects, have become more complex and problematic. Certainly, this raises a question of whether the system of community financing/cost-sharing is really relevant and effective. Considering the fact that the majority of community-based educational projects are targeting the most impoverished, rural agricultural areas, the imposition of community financing system would become only an added burden to households that send their children to schools in different community.

Continuous Popular Demands for Schooling: contradictions in transition

Crucial to the strategy of educational decentralization and community participation is the reformers' optimistic belief in continuous high demands for schooling among the population. Indeed, even within a context of limited job market, people's perception has been that the traditional school system still offers the best opportunity of escaping poverty (Hall, 1986, p. 84). Believing in a popular appeal of schooling, the governments whose educational expenditure is largely consumed by teachers' salaries appreciate and

implement the idea of community level cost-sharing for school expenditure.

However, popular demands for schooling have been gradually replaced with popular dismay about schooling, due to the non-attainment of expected benefits. The unclear link between the completion of primary school education and the successful entrance into further education or secure job attainment often hinders popular interests in formal schooling as it is only considered costly and time-consuming. In the case of Ghana, for example, data available from Ghana National Human Development Report shows a significant rise in unemployment and underemployment from 18.5% in 1987 to 21.3% in 1993. Declining employment in the formal sector and further jobless growth in the entire nation have resulted in the growing unemployment among the young educated, including university graduates (UNDP, 1997). To explain the perceptions of Ghanaian parents facing this reality, Baku & Agyeman (1997) state that:

> Parents may not have any motivation to send their children to school and the children themselves [not] want to remain in school if education, by its content, gives no hope or prospect of better jobs and better life in the future than for those who fail to attend school (cited in Condy, 1998).

Similarly, ActionAid, a British international NGO, maintains that:

> For most of the children who successfully complete primary education, secondary education remains a distant dream. The high costs of secondary education could also partly explain low primary school completion rates, as parents, knowing there is no chance of following it through, give up on their children's education early ("Formal Education," 2003).

In situations as these, especially for impoverished communities and households, the credibility of formal schooling is revealed to be a mere cult, and the idea of community participation, or more specifically, cost-sharing, is seen as little more than added burden offering no tangible benefits. These perceptions further contribute to a stagnating enrolment and high early school-leaver rate. According to Rose (2003a), where

households could neither afford time nor money, they sometimes respond by withdrawing children from school (p. 60). It is often the reality that children from the poorest households are most likely to be withdrawn from school and least likely to be in school in the first place because of the demand for various contributions to school (Rose, 2003a, p. 60). Simple implementations of community participation without acknowledging these aspects are likely to result in the reproduction and/or exacerbation of existing inequalities in children's educational opportunities, and moreover, the marginalization of already vulnerable young people.

As long as the social dimensions of the issue, i.e., poverty and unemployment, remain untouched and unsolved, ambitious community-based school reform projects risk creating a further backlash of dissatisfaction and self/collective-alienation in poor rural areas. Rahnema (1995) writes that:

> Participation has come to be "disembedded" from the socio-cultural roots which has always kept it alive. It is now simply perceived as one of the many "resources" needed to keep the economy alive. To participate is thus reduced to the act of partaking in the objectives of the economy... (p. 120).

Even when people participate in reform projects, forced, inequitable community participation risks not only the quality of projects but also the day-to-day lives of the already poor.

Ruralized Education: principles and realities

As has been stated earlier, most community-linked/driven schooling projects are predicated on the assumption that the integration of community and school leads to the development of educational programs that are relevant to local, practical needs. It is often assumed that such locally relevant curriculum will remedy emerging needs toward rural

development. Various education reform policies and projects have been made, predicated on the efficacy of ruralized/vocational curriculum, community participation, and self-help. However, the implementation of ruralized/vocational curriculum in village schools is not always appreciated by local people as an effective and suitable accommodation. Despite such a reality, the process of rationalizing and implementing rural accommodations have continued to be disembedded from the perceptions of rural dwellers. The following section sheds light on such local people's (including young school leavers') perceptions toward locally relevant rural curriculum in relation to rural/agricultural livelihood. My discussion also includes the necessary preconditions for efficient and sustainable implementations of locally relevant education.

Blueprint of Ruralized Education and Local Perceptions: contradictions

In countries where agriculture remains the main source of income for the majority, the governments and international agencies have found a great necessity for rural agricultural development. Rural agricultural development has been thought as an important, finally appropriate, and realistic strategy for the achievement of national development. In addition, the internal migration of rural dwellers to urban centers has become a great concern among governments and agencies, as migration has been swelling the number of unemployed and underemployed in the urban areas with no position to contribute to national economic development (Folson, 1993, p. 140). This awareness has further led to the call for the reform and development of educational content toward a curriculum that is more attuned to self-employment and self-reliance in rural lives. In Ghana, for example, the nation's agricultural expansion boosted the anticipation of policy

makers for establishing the stable rural-based small-scale industries with the educated rural workforce with relevant vocational skills, literacy and numeracy. However, in many cases, these governments' blueprints for reform have been thwarted by various setbacks, mainly as a logical consequence of the inadequate national funding policy. That is, within limited financial resources, governments have often encountered the problem of efficiently prioritizing profitable agricultural development in ways that bring about structural transformation for rural livelihood. As long as there is an apparent time lag between the government-stated manifesto focusing on self-help and community participation, and the actual systemic/structural transformation conducive to rural economic development, the implementation of ruralized curriculum will continue to be deemed by rural dwellers as a means of containerization and regionalization of rural communities.

Many of those who live in rural areas "have no cozy ideas about the idyllic self-contained rural village" (Martin, 1982, p. 6). In Ghana, as in other "post-colonial" nations, as a result of the deliberate change in the form of social structure from the traditional form to the new social stratification based on occupation, the stratification pressure have continued to be held by young people. As Rahnema (1997) notes, "[a] culture of 'individual' success and of socially imputed 'needs' led younger men to depart their villages, leaving behind dislocated families of women, children and older men who had no one to rely on but the promises of often unattainable 'goods' and 'services'" (p. x). This imported 'culture' has been so deeply embedded in the mentalities and minds of young generations. Young school leavers in rural communities continue to search for white-collar clerical employment in urban centers to escape from the "drudgery and miserable financial returns of 'subsistence' agriculture" (Folson, 1993, p. 129). I described

earlier the increasing popular dismay about schooling; however, there is not yet a consistent groundswell of popular alienation from schooling. Even while facing and acknowledging the unavailability of modern sector jobs for everybody, young rural school-leavers continue to believe that their education will bring about higher probability of attaining profitable white-collar jobs with superior income, which will break down the cycle of poverty.

For example, in Ghana, ActionAid, a British international NGO, implemented the Shepherd School Program, in 1996, to make basic education more accessible to agri-pastoral children in Bawku West, one of the most remote and educationally marginalized areas in Northern Ghana. Shepherd schools are managed by local people, and subjects are designed to be relevant to local needs. The program was expanded to offer 6 years of primary education to encourage children to move on to the public Junior Secondary Schools (JSS). Because the expensive Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) are not a reality for many of the pastoral families, the program objective is set as to encourage students to attain JSS education and return to the community with that literary and numeracy skills to become good agri-pastoralists. However, one of the unanticipated consequences was reported to be "over consciousness-raising." (Mfum-Mensah, 2003, p. 673). Children and community members, offered institutionalized educational opportunities for the first time in their lives, have become extremely ambitious about the benefits of education and the attainment of further SSS level education in order to move on to white-collar professions. Especially, today, the rural population in agricultural/pastoral communities find themselves in danger, as their farming or pastoral vocations are becoming considerably less profitable and viable (Mfum-Mensah, 2003, p. 671). Many of

them come to think that ruralized curricula will only be of use if agricultural sectors of the national economy are reformed to benefit small-scale farming communities.

In such situations, educational planners have strived to counteract uncertainty and unrest held by agri-pastoralists, even to an extent where schools' hidden curriculum is formulated to offset popular unrest. Folson's (1993) analysis illustrates the nature of some of the revised locally relevant school curricula:

> The demand of the poor in rural areas for fair prices for agricultural products, better access and transportation to markets, supply of inputs (seeds, fertilizers, agricultural machines) and consultant agencies, is the result of the awareness of the minimal rights they are entitled to. This awareness and also certain attitudes and bahaviours are communicated as part of the schools hidden curriculum (p. 150).

However, the reality still commonly shows, not people's awareness of how best they can and are entitled to improve their economic situation, but their fear toward economic, structural regionalization and containerization through prescribed locally relevant curriculum. There seems to be an identifiable gap between the governments' blueprint for rural development via ruralized, terminating education and local people's perceptions toward such accommodations. Hall (1986) effectively illustrates this gap:

> What officials saw as a more appropriate package of measures better suited to the needs of rural populations, the people themselves saw as an inferior form of instruction which would not equip them for the modern sector jobs they so desperately desired. What governments perceived as an approach which would reduce the pressure on cities and urban higher education facilities by keeping more people in the countryside, rural dwellers perceived as a two-tier system of educational apartheid which would reinforce class barriers even further and deny to them forever a chance of breaking the vicious circle of poverty (p. 83).

My intention here is not to argue against or refute the possibility of rural development, but to emphasize the importance of acknowledging the predominance of poverty and the crisis in agricultural/rural livelihood. First and foremost, there is a strong

need for governments to help reach the profitable agricultural output and improve the environment of the "rural poor," especially small-scale farmers. These efforts may range, depending on circumstances, from farmer training to changes in agricultural pricing policies or land ownership regulations. They have to practice the coherent and continuous confrontation with the plight of societies along with the reform and development of troubled educational system. In the absence of adequate policy/systemic reform that can be truly advantageous for rural agricultural economy, too much emphasis and reliance on community-linked ruralized curriculum reform have the potential to result in unequal regionalization and polarization within a nation.

Decentralization: a structure for community participation or containerization?

The concept of educational decentralization has attained legitimacy in conjunction with the notion of community participation in education reform. Decentralized systems of education have often been regarded as a necessary condition and structure for effective community participation in education (Sayed, 1999). Advocates of decentralization suggest that when decisions are made with greater community participation, they are potentially more responsive to diverse interests and needs of community members than in cases when decisions are crafted only by central decision-makers (Litvack & Seddon, 1999, p. 8). Although a large number of attempts have been made to support education reform projects focused on educational decentralization and community participation in education, little effort has been made to investigate the logic of the efficacy of decentralization. This section examines some of the downplayed missing links and possible negative outcomes in educational decentralization.

Objectives and Strategies of Educational Decentralization

Decentralization holds up "the promise of a re-ordering of political space and a revitalization of 'the local' in terms of accountability and choice" (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p.250). The main objectives of decentralization can be understood as to (1) strengthen local governments, (2) enhance transparency, (3) improve the delivery of government policies and services to the lower levels, and (4) promote grass-roots participation in deciding their needs and contributing to development efforts (Mankoe, 1992). A generally accepted interpretation of educational decentralization is that it is "a means to ensure wider representation of legitimate interests in education" (Lauglo & McLean, 1985, p. 5) and to achieve a redistribution of responsibility and authority in decision-making for delivering education. Shaeffer (1992) assumes some of the possible benefits of educational decentralization as (1) flexible responses to the needs and context of individual communities and schools, (2) a clear division of labor and responsibility across various systemic levels, and (3) clear patterns of expected behavior and tasks (p. 171).

In the development industry, the model of educational decentralization has been receiving increased attention through various routes, i.e., IFIs, the UN agencies, USAID and NGOs. In the case of Ghana, for example, in 1996, the government launched the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and has been trying to increase community involvement in decision-making about their local schools. One of the major efforts was the USAID-sponsored Quality Improvements in the Primary Schooling (QUIPS), whose key theme was to support the decentralization process and to encourage participation of community-level groups in educational decision-making ("Education," 2003). The QUIPS program focuses on four major results:

> First, improvement of the learning environment through policy change and by strengthening the capacity of districts to effectively plan and manage resources. Second, effective classroom teaching supported through improved supervision, continuous student assessment and pupil-centred teaching methods. Third, greater community involvement in local education through assistance to local school associations and committees... The fourth, policy reform, concentrates on improving educational policies in four critical areas: (1) curriculum development; (2) educational personnel management; (3) capacity building at the local level; and (4) school data collection and analysis ("Education," 2003).

As can be seen in this example, the strategies and policies for local involvement and capacity building have become a major component of many of the recent education reform programs. Major development institutions have come to acknowledge decentralized structures and procedures as mechanisms reciprocally facilitating greater community participation in education. They demonstrate, at least rhetorically, the strong emphases on structural decentralization as a means to achieve local capacity building, autonomy and democracy. However, the interpretations of decentralization are not just about them. A fluid, flexible discourse of decentralization has the potential to be utilized and practiced by different ideological interests (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p. 250). The concept of decentralization is, in actuality, often merely practiced as a means to shift a financial and administrative burden of education onto the local levels—as a part of a monetarist and/or managerialist discourse.

Efficacy of Community-level Training and Workshops

The provision of training and tutelage is often advocated and implemented by community leaders and provincial/district/school personnel to foster local-level capacity. This strategy has been well acknowledged and widely implemented as a means to overcome some of the constraints to effective community participation, i.e., a lack of

human resources, a lack of managerial and supervisory skills among key actors, and individuals' inabilities and resistance to change. In some areas, to fill in these pitfalls at the local level, governments and aid agencies have designed and integrated training and workshops as components of education reform programs, expecting that such community-level human resource development programs can bring about a positive and productive impact. However, the efficacy of such training and workshops is seldom questioned. Instead, its unprecedented credibility is so widely shared and legitimated that it continues to allow states and other macro-level actors to sidetrack their responsibilities of transforming organizational norms and other structural constraints.

There seems to be the two-fold rationale for the institutional accommodations of training: (1) training becomes a means to enhance new managerial and supervisory skills and proficiency of those directly involved in local decision-making and administration (Miller, 1987; Shaeffer, 1992; Maclure, 1994); and (2) training contributes to the development of high levels of commitments to schooling and other community programs (Maclure, 1994). Ultimately, it is intended to foster effective local organizations and networks with capable human resources, which is considered imperative for the sustainability of decentralized, community-based education reform programs. It may be arguable that the logic underscoring the efficacy of training parallels, to some extent, the core points of social capital theory. For social capital theorists, it is crucial to implement "the scaling up of existing social capital to create organizations that are sufficiently able to effectively pursue development goals" (Evans, 1996, p. 1130). As Brown & Ashman (1996) maintain, "[the] creation and strengthening of social capital in the form of local organizations and networks is an essential task in building intersectoral cooperation that

mobilizes and utilizes local resources and energies for problem solving" (p. 1477). Needs for community-level basic organizations with a strong management capacity are clearly articulated in the World Bank documents. For example, referring to the failures in community-based development projects, Narayan (1995) indicates: "Groups have failed because too much was expected of them too soon without any supportive training in management or specific skills. Getting local groups to become self-management organizations can extend over several years and does not happen without investment in capacity building" (p. 16). Practically, in some areas, governments have sought to organize workshops that are intended to teach various strategies and techniques, i.e., about how to effectively organize meetings and deal with conflicts, or how to form systemic accounting systems (Bray, 1996, pp. 28-29).

However, anticipated outcomes are unlikely to be achieved in such a straightforward way. First, such externally organized workshops and training are often confronted with various constraints and limitations. For instance, as Maclure (1994) indicates, "bounded flexibility" in project delivery, such as limited financial resources and pre-determined timelines, limits focuses of training merely to the immediate skill and attitude development. Such inflexibilities defy the development of a sense of ownership and empowerment among a local constituency. Second, because such training is designed and controlled by aid agencies or governments, agendas and constitutions of training are sometimes set with a zero-sum involvement of local stakeholders. In Ghana, for example, in the Primary School Development Project, the workshops were organized to explain the project design to community leaders, and to help government officials form the ideas about variations and constraints in different communities via meetings with community leaders

(World Bank, 1993). However, generally, these efforts of involving community participants are made, not before, but only after models of projects are officially designed and confirmed. The content of training which trainees are required to learn and be equipped with is often prescribed by centralized agencies with little attention to local perceptions, values and intentions. Here, the system is likely to be administratively decentralized but substantially remain centralized.

Decentralization for Conflict Management and Decentralized Despotism

Decentralization is often presented as an effective administrative strategy for conflict management. With trained local personnel working as an organizer of local administration and as a mediator for various situations of tension, conflict and disagreement, it is assumed that the thrust of sources of conflict is domesticated and channeled into parallel structures, thus being easily contained and monitored (Weiler, 1989, p. 17). While isolating and locally encapsulating, and diffusing and defusing sources of conflict, states and central ministries can keep their major tasks and responsibility manageable. Also, the decentralized system is expected to enable local governments to become more in tune with the wants and needs of local constituencies, and to be better placed to appropriately distribute resources (Litvack & Seddon, 1999, p. 10).

However, decentralized structures, particularly one with a continuously centralized substance, can do more than a conflict management or substitution for state responsibility. Hidden mechanisms of decentralization seem to mirror many aspects of the colonially imposed tribe system:

> Defined and marked as a member of a tribe, the colonized African was more full encapsulated in customarily governed relations... The more custom was endorsed, the

> more the tribe was restructured and conserved as a more or less self-contained community—autonomous but not independent—as it never had been before. Encased by custom, frozen into so many tribes, each under the fist of its own Native Authority, the subject population was, as it were, containerized (Mamdani, 1996, p. 51).

The description of the colonial tribe system seems to be still relevant to account for the situations of some of the decentralized educational and other social systems. In the decentralized structures, people tend to be containerized into a set of relationships and social entities such as community, village and district, which are sometimes one-sidedly and externally imposed. Defined and marked as members of community, willingly or unwillingly, individuals are containerized under a control of local community leaders, who are often authoritarian to local people, and subject to ministries and governments. Mamdani's (1996) account of objectives and mechanisms of indirect rule would be worth noting:

> [I]ndirect rule was never just a commonsense, pragmatic, and cost-efficient administrative strategy that utilized local personnel to fill its lowest tiers. Its point was to create a dependent but autonomous system of rule, one that combined accountability to superiors with a flexible response to the subject population, a capacity to implement central directives with one to absorb local shocks" (p. 60)

In this way, decentralization has the potential to serve as "a device to reduce innovation and change" at a local level (Weiler, 1989, p. 18). In other words, to give a more pessimistic view, a decentralized structure is implemented as a means to sustain despotism in a more defuse manner. By allowing local states a degree of autonomy, and having them function as a conveyor belt for central state policies, decentralization contributes to build a regime of indirect rule (Mamdani, 1996). The advanced claim would be that "the policy of decentralisation is an attempt by the state to operate at a distance. In operating at a distance, the state portrays itself as being one with the people" (Sayed, 1999, p. 143). Some ambitious vocabularies like "devolution" and "local government autonomy" are likely to

be tactically translated into little more than a recreation of the centralized state on the local level. Political and substantial decentralization are not achieved in situations as these.

For opponents of centralized systems and state interventions, any form of correspondence between the central and the local is not viewed and seen as an efficient goal/strategy. Some suggest that to accelerate collaborative and participatory enterprise for education, systems have to release local level officials from their bondage to the central. However, it should be noted that sustainable development and a large-scale reform cannot be achieved only with decentralization. It necessitates backing from, and links to, the central organizations. Thus, a patterned critique of centralized educational systems and unqualiable appreciation of complete decentralization have the potential to risk making the strategy of decentralization the sole substitute and "trouble-shooter" for financial, administrative and political problems.

Summary

This chapter highlighted some of the major assumptions and rationales behind the policies and strategies of community participation in education reform programs, and examined how and why these assumptions are misplaced, and what educational as well as socio-economic implications are brought about. For example, the romantist and essentialist assumption of community as a harmonious and homogenous social entity downplays the importance of location-specific project development, and moreover, obscures complex social locations of community members and potentially oppressive and exploitative local power relations. Also, while the efficacy of local knowledge input for ruralized/locally-relevant curriculum development is widely theorized and textualized, at a

specific project-level, little effort has been made to critically analyze the actual formation/content of presented local knowledge and the constitution of "participatory" projects. Furthermore, the assumption/belief that community members are highly committed to and strongly calling for the school improvement in their communities has the potential to overlook some negative perceptions and fluid motivations/aspirations of community members, and moreover, to obscure the importance of state action against persistent social problems preventing educational improvement. In addition, the optimistic expectation for the smooth implementation of ruralized curriculum in rural sectors fails to acknowledge the persistence of rural poverty, and the negative stigma attached to agriculturalist ways of life as a result of a colonial legacy biased toward white-collar occupations. My discussion also analyzed the taken-for-granted efficacy of educational decentralization as a necessary and effective precondition for greater participatory governance, depicting possible situations where decentralization is used as a means for decentralized despotism, instead of genuine devolution of decision-making by civil society.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This final chapter offers a summary of discussions from the previous chapters. It also provides a vision and potential (i.e., necessary preconditions and transformations) for sustainable and effective implementations of community-based, participatory approaches in education reform programs. A series of recommendations for further studies are also presented.

Review of the Study

Despite great optimistic anticipations for community participation approaches in international development, there exists a significant lack of critical examinations of the foundational rationales and assumptions upon which the credibility and efficacy of the approaches are predicated, presented, politicized and practiced. My review of the related literatures also identified the lack of research on critical issues in the application of community-based participatory approaches particularly to education reform programs, offering examinations that incorporated micro and macro, local and international, or text and context. This study focused on identifying assumptions and rationales underlying the ideas and strategies of community participation, investigating the qualifiability of such assumptions, and exploring how and why they are blindly held and misplaced. The study also sought to conceptualize the central, institutional strategic themes and intentions running thorough the historical and recent projects of participatory development. To this end, the study deployed a documentary analysis as a major data collection method,

drawing on the principles of critical policy analysis and critical discourse analysis in order to investigate, both in text and context, the ways in which the major institutional assumptions are documented and legitimated.

Summary of Findings

This section summarizes major findings of the study, especially regarding the problematic assumptions examined in the study. First, the lack of considerations of differences among communities in different spatial, cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts has the potential to result in the applications of mono-strategic project manuals, which deters the achievement of location-specific project design and implementations. Also, complex social locations of community members, and discursive practices of local power relations require careful attention because failing to acknowledge them can result in the preservation of *pseudo*-practices of "representative participation," and moreover, the continuous underdevelopment of educational quality and access.

Second, my analysis revealed that the move toward locally-relevant curriculum creation with community knowledge input often downplays the problematic mechanisms of local knowledge productions and representations (i.e., local dominant cultural/social norms and traditional customary practices), which may serve to retain potentially oppressive local power relations and negatively affect educational opportunity of school-aged children. Also, the continuously researcher-centered, pre-defined nature of many "community-based/driven" projects prevent community members from actual self-determinations and self-definitions of their needs, interests and capacities, as a result of which, community members often become passive receivers of "professionally-made"

decisions.

Third, the belief in continuous public demand for schooling and community members' motivations and commitments to school improvement appear questionable, and thus unqualified in some cases. It is problematic to turn such an uncontested belief into a rationale for community participation when persistent social issues remain unsolved—the issues of (1) educational inequalities among regions, especially between urban and rural; (2) unemployment and underemployment of school graduates; and (3) unlikely recruitment into higher education.

Fourth, my analysis informed that despite the anticipated and theorized efficacy of ruralized/locally-relevant curriculum, rural dwellers and school graduates do not perceive such educational accommodations as desirable or sustainable. Rather, they view them as the way of unfair regional containerization, and in order to escape the cycle of poverty, many of them continue to appreciate and seek for more solely "academic" curriculum. These points make explicit the needs for the overall structural transformations of both rural and urban socio-economic situations, particularly the situations with persistent poverty.

Fifth, the efficacy of educational decentralization, which is often used as a rationale for increased community and parental participation, is more rhetoric and propagandized as it often fails to achieve the actual devolution of decision-making practices in ways that are more transformatory and substantial. Combining these findings, my overall discussion cautioned against the uncontested assumptions and unqualifiable commitments to "educational revolution" that are heavily and solely reliant on community participation.

Recommendations: visions and potentials for community participation in education

Analyses in the previous chapters of the complexities and paradoxes of community participation in education leave the fundamental question of the validity and desirability of such participatory approaches. What needs to be avoided here is a pessimistic over-consciousness about the negative outcomes of such approaches and a simplistic denial of community/citizenship participation. What needs to be emphasized instead are concerted efforts to develop and sustain the systems and channels that continue to revitalize, and be revitalized by, genuine forms of participation. To create visions of effective community/citizenship participation and potentials for such, this section examines what kind of systems and channels are imperative for a realization of such goals. However, I am cognizant that it is not appropriate or relevant to offer a mono-theoretical explanation for how effective community participation should occur. Visions and potentials for community participation should be examined and formed on a situation-specific basis. Nonetheless, it seems that a dynamic process of fostering genuine community/citizenship participation basically necessitates the orchestrated efforts through various different forms of transformation at various different levels. Different levels and forms of transformations are clustered into the following three contexts/levels: (1) transformation of political situation and state's roles; (2) organizational, institutional accommodations; and (3) formation of effective micro/project-level mechanisms.

Political Situation and State's Role Facilitating Equal Opportunities

Due to the strong backlash against the conventional top-down development paradigm, the state's involvement seems to be negatively viewed and seen as thwarting

democratic and meaningful community participation. In this social climate, so many difficulties and problems in educational development have been off-loaded onto local administrative bodies, community members and NGOs. Community participation seems to be often implemented as a substitute for state responsibility of wider structural and institutional transformations. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to ignore the profitable roles that the state can play in educational development. This is especially so because schooling, or any other (formal or non-formal) educational initiative, is not an autonomous system but a social subsystem that can only be understood in interaction with its social, political, and economic contexts (Bock, 1983, p. 337). Thus, the failures as well as successes of education reform through community participation should be also examined, not limitedly in the program-level context, but more comprehensively in the nation's socio-economic and political context. Long-term goals of transformation cannot be achieved by people's organizations and movements on their own without engaging with wider political processes.

Rehabilitation and transformation of political and socio-economic systems are mandatory to achieve effective, genuine and sustainable community participation in education reform projects. As has been examined in the previous chapter, when education reform programs are solely reliant on community participation, various pragmatic difficulties and limitations appear to be undeniable. This is not to argue that community participation is not an appropriate approach for educational development. Rather, it is to claim that the idea of community participation should not be manipulatively used as an excuse for states to evade their responsibilities. For education reform through community participation to be sustainable and effective, states should not fall short of striving for the

long-term, nation-wide project of transforming financial, institutional and structural constraints.

Firstly, to achieve equitable and sustainable educational development and foster effective community participation, it is extremely important for states to confront the whole issue of poverty. In emerging nations, the reality of poverty is plaguing the everyday lives of the majority of populations, and remains a huge obstacle that hinders the objectives of most community-based and non-formal education projects. However, while focusing on achieving specific missions, i.e., locally relevant/ruralized curriculum formation, many of the educational reformers and government personnel have failed to understand the predominance of structural constraining factors such as poverty. Without an adequate structural transformation which assures the value of such educational accommodations, and a direct link between adoption of locally relevant education and improvements in income and livelihood, the implementation of locally relevant education for rural development will not make sense to the already impoverished population in rural areas. The value of such education is unlikely to be assured without first establishing the social systems with political and economic stability and consistency.

Secondly, states should discontinue their laissez-faire positions toward the growing inequalities in society, especially inequalities of opportunity and privilege. Selection and exclusion are the socially prevailing realities in almost every corner of the world. In less industrialized nations with small job markets, a process of selection taken by most employers has almost become the process of selection/recruitment biased toward the better educated (mostly graduates from urban upper/middle-class formal schools) or that of negotiation with powerful parents with high levels of social capital. In these circumstances,

non-formal school graduates are the most handicapped in pursuing secure profitable employment. The majority of formal school graduates are equally vulnerable as they are not only stripped of their cultural values, but also confronted with the reality of social capital "power play" with their academic achievements basically disregarded.

What kind of state action would be conducive to the transformation of this situation? The creation of more employment would be one strategy/goal. But also, states can work to increase the official recognition of non-formal education and locally relevant educational accommodations as equally superior and effective innovations. As Hall (1986) insists, "Where the structure of opportunities and economic incentives has been substantially modified to make commitment to non-formal education a rational personal choice which will bring substantial benefits to the poor, educational innovations stand a much greater chance of successes" (p. 85). Here, the greatest task for states would be, first and foremost, to discourage the elitism that still predominates in both rural and urban areas, and furthermore, to break down a stigma historically attached to non-formal education as the inferior or "second-best." This negative stigma, having been heavily penetrated into people's perceptions, results in the general rejection of locally relevant educational accommodations—simply because they are less academic. To overcome these prevailing perceptions, efforts to officially recognize non-formal education should consistently include the assurance of adequate financial backing and improved quality of teaching and learning practices. Furthermore, states whose major focus in educational reform has been on the expansion of basic primary education must also start to work on the accessibility of secondary and higher education. When expensive secondary education is a distant dream for the majority of children, especially those from low-income backgrounds, they tend to

decide not to, or are not permitted by parents to, even complete their earlier primary education.

Thirdly, when an unlikely financial rescue is a reality of nations, states need to strive for a better financing of educational projects and pursue more sustainable outcome. For more effective financial allocation, greater collaboration and responsiveness between the top and the bottom sectors of educational administrative systems would be a crucial move. To increase the sustainability of education projects, states must proceed and facilitate a more careful consultation and collaborative learning with various stakeholders, including local community members. Also, to make best use of limited resources, states must re-examine their current educational policies and budgetary allocation systems. For example, the tracking of national budget (and/or foreign aid) allocation would be effective in avoiding duplication and concentration of educational funds and projects. These efforts would help minimize misplacement of funding and maximize establishment of sustainable projects with greater equity.

Last but foremost, it is imperative to be cognizant of the further complexities that have been brought about by on-going globalization mechanisms. In some instances, in the era of globalization, it becomes inappropriate or ineffective to develop an argument of nations' socio-economic issues relative to community participation, solely referring to state government responsibilities. One of the implications of globalization, particularly in the form of neo-liberal strategy implementation, is the increased linkages between local and global, or sometimes more specifically, between top/privileged sectors of nations across the global-South and the global-North. This is very much likely to further the existing social stratification as well as social fragmentation within a nation. Therefore,

nations' socio-economic issues such as the issue of poverty is strongly hoped to be addressed in a wide-scale discussion framework of international policies/agendas and globalization.

Organizational, Institutional Accommodations

Mechanisms facilitating collaboration and genuine community participation cannot be automatically formulated or sustained. Consistent and concerted efforts should be made to not only establish some sort of regulating frameworks that facilitate equitable power arrangement but also foster the political will that is more democratic. This section examines possible mechanisms and procedures encouraging the idea of community participation, and securing the needs and interests of community stakeholders.

First of all, consistent efforts should be made to establish administrative and organizational regulations and policies that protect and facilitate the valid community participation and collaboration between various actors in education reform project. Macro-level (ministry/district-level) organizational and administrative regulations need to be re-examined, especially in nations with corrupted political systems, where the checks and balances are not well-grounded, but rather, ill-grounded, in policy and practice. In some instances, ministry and district-level regulations could be huge constraints on high-level participatory contributions and inputs of various actors in schooling and education reform. There is a situation where ministry regulations restrict participation of community members or those who are not teachers, not professional in pedagogical matters. For example, as Shaeffer (1992) describes, ministry regulations in some regions forbid parent associations from being involved in "academic matter," and in other regions, there are

ministry regulations that prohibit the hiring of local teachers (p. 169). When rhetorically calling for and aiming for greater understanding of local needs and wants, educational policymakers should rethink about the rationale for, and the validity of, some of the (potentially restrictive) existing regulations and policies.

Second, when the recognition is made of the relevance and validity of non-formal education, states may be able to start working on the formation of new policies that legalize and facilitate the official recognition of effective aspects of non-formal education into the mainstream formal education systems. Recently, more attention has been paid to the importance of incorporating non-formal educational content, which is perceived as more indigenous, practical and less academic, into the Western-oriented, 'more academic' educational content. As Abdi (2001) suggests, it is of great necessity to acknowledge and proceed "the gradual but consistent incorporation of some temporally rewarding indigenous systems of learning, ways of perception, modes of evaluation and points of priority into the dominant European systems of education" (p. 241). To this end, concerted efforts of, and genuine partnerships between, states' policy circles, local community groups and NGOs would be mandatory in fostering the collaborative learning and supporting forum. For instance, by settings up policy seminars, constant meetings, conferences and exhibitions, examinations and case studies of successful experiences and failures in non-formal education programs would be key elements in an effective strategy toward change.

It should be noted here, however, that terms such as "collaboration" and "partnership" have the potential to become jargon used to refer to statutory ideals without feasible substance. In the past, there were some instances where in the act of legitimating

non-formal education and expanding it, the state tamed it and subverted its original goals and interests (Bock, 1983, p. 340). This raises a question of how to forge effective alliances without submerging the community organizations and NGOs' own identities while securing a certain degree of administrative checks and balances in a policy framework. It seems to be often the case that the idea of various grassroots actor involvement is manipulatively compacted into, and merely equated with, the institutionalization of non-formal sectors without achieving the inclusion of their fundamental principles and objectives, resulting in a great degree of the institutionalism. In education, there is a danger of the tidal wave of institutionalization of NGO schools, striving to increase the number of school/infrastructures (containers), does not lead to careful assessment, design and implementation of educational content (substance) offered in non-formal education settings. One of the biggest challenges is how to achieve the official recognition of effectiveness found in non-formal education (its educational systems and contents) at the same time as avoiding educational inequalities, academic as well as socio-economic disparities, and regional containerization. Maybe, the fundamental issue is how to foster the overall, holistic recognition in formal educational institutions of the NGOs sector as potentially synergizing partners. Some indicate, as a strategy, the efficacy of forming coordinating units for NGO activities within education ministries and other governmental/district-level organizations (Shaeffer, 1992). However, if, in actual implementation processes, these accommodations/mechanisms are not consistently founded upon collaborative organizational and individual norms and mindsets, they would be little more than another panacea for an unattainable illusion. Conventional, rigid norms and mindsets have to be first transformed. Both institutionally and individually, there

should be a strong political will among organizations and personnel to adopt mindsets that are more democratic, and that create the culture of inclusive politics. Fostering of higher level of acceptance and collaboration would be the first and foremost step especially in situations where administrations and individual personnel are not in favor of involving local people who are not "professional" in administrative and management affairs. If the culture of acceptance is achieved in politics across various sectors/levels of organizational systems, the increased sharing and learning of knowledge and skills would be fostered between the top and the bottom sides of the systems. To achieve this form of partnership and collaboration, states and administrations must be ready to change and be willing to co-operate and collaborate with non-governmental/non-bureaucratic actors (Shaeffer, 1992).

How can such transformations be realized? Shaeffer (1992) maintains that transformation of norms and mindsets can be intensified "less through the explicit training of personnel at the provincial and national levels, and more through their sensitization or orientation to the rationale for, potential of, and constraints to greater participation in educational development" (p. 181). It would be important to orient ourselves to a question of what roles education can, and should, play in nations' development processes. The clarification of this fundamental question would help form and define the purposes and contents of education and any form of participation of other stakeholders in educational development. The time has come for the state to re-examine the prevailing assumptions and mindsets about the roles of education and re-define it within a framework of the nation's development process.

Formation of Effective Micro/Project-Level Mechanisms

Micro/school/community-level partnerships cannot grow out of a vacuum. The macro/ministry-level organizations should formulate the mechanisms and socio-political climate in which participation can continue to be fostered. As culture and history of an area often affect the validity of participatory approaches, the range and types of mechanisms facilitating participation at micro/project-level can be best examined on a situation-specific basis. Also, examining a tremendous number of participatory approaches/methods useful for greater participation is beyond the scope of my analysis. Thus, this section selectively examines the desirability and efficiency of grassroots-level regulations for effective community participation.

In practice, many education reform projects with community participation have seen conflictual situations where teachers do not welcome the increased community involvement in school management and other pedagogical matters. Teachers sometimes perceive community participation in education as defaulting and threatening acts on their professional territory. Condy (1998) illustrate a conflictual situation between teachers and community members in a community-based school improvement projects;

> The focus on the communities also risks creating a backlash of opposition from others (teachers and education specialists) to community involvement in such projects. The project's focus on communities rather than teachers resulted quite frequently in a conflictual situation between the teachers and the communities. Even while lacking the means to become fully empowered, the project achieved its goal of encouraging communities to question teachers, which in many cases put their backs up, negatively affected teacher-community relations, and reduced the change of mutual cooperation to improve the quality of schooling (p. 16).

Furthermore, there are cases where community members themselves do not feel motivated or confident enough to get involved in pedagogical matters in schooling management. They tend to conceive that any problem in schooling, especially academic matters, should

be best dealt with by teachers and best solved with their judgments. Without the formulation and publication of clearly defined frameworks and regulations, situations as these might, at worst, result in reform projects with no responsible participants with consistent and continuous commitments. As Shaeffer (1992) indicates, formation of clearly defined, and possibly written, frameworks and regulations are conducive to explaining and informing rights, tasks, functions, responsibilities, limitations, resources, and accountability to stakeholders. Here, it is also imperative to understand, Baku & Agyeman (2002) suggest, that "communities should be encouraged to participate in areas in which they have comparative capability and, therefore, policy makers should not impose a common set of responsibilities on all communities without regard to their capabilities" (p. 155). Such regulations can not only clarify the responsibilities and functions of each actor and help avoid possible sources of conflict, but also foster increased synergetic partnerships between schools, teachers and community members.

Suggestions for Further Studies

I would like to make a few suggestions for further studies in the related area of research. Following are some of the suggested research focuses and contents that appear crucial and conducive to the knowledge basis of effective community participation in education:

1. A study that compares the degree of the NGOs sector engagement in school improvement initiatives and the level of rural dwellers' aspirations for locally relevant/ruralized curriculum, analyzing possible relationships between the level of institutionalization of NGO schools and the degree of increased credibility and

appreciation of such educational accommodations

2. A study that examines the extent to which community-level workshops and training can effectively foster community members' positive recognitions of locally relevant/ruralized curriculum
3. A study that describes the kinds of professional development training implemented to improve teaching practices of NGO school teachers, and that explores the potential outcomes of such training, i.e., community members' recognitions of, and aspirations for, non-formal education, their participation and commitment level, and school enrolment rate
4. A study that looks at the effects of administrative and organizational regulations pre-defining the roles that community members should play and the areas that they should participate
    - From an optimistic perspective, a detailed study of the extent to which such regulations and policies potentially motivate community members for greater participation
    - From a pessimistic perspective, a detailed study of whether such boundaries imposed upon community members, in terms of their roles and tasks, can become reasons/excuses for their non-participation
    - By exploring different regulations that are currently at work, a detailed study that examines whether the assessment/judgment of community members' capacities are based on comprehensive, location-specific analyses of their actual capacities and situations
5. A study that examines teachers' acceptance of community members participating in

school administration, management and teaching, particularly in contrast with socio-economic situations of a target school community as well as social recognitions attached to teaching occupations (that are often shaped historically and culturally)

6. A study that focuses on the degree of consistency between strategies/focuses/norms of central, mainstream institutions and those of local institutions and local personnel, examining how and to what extent a central development thinking trickles down to, and is being reproduced in, a bottom sector project level
7. A long-term empirical study that, with a clear measurement of such elements as collaboration/coordination and sustainable development, examines interrelationships between governments' increased initiatives in community participation in education reform, their collaboration with NGOs, and sustainability as well as overall social desirability of community-based school programs.

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